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*Enabling Leaders to Navigate
Complexity: An Executive Coaching
Framework.*

*A project submitted to Middlesex
University in partial fulfilment for the
degree of Doctor of Professional
Studies*

Louise C. Kovacs

Institute for Work Based Learning
Middlesex University

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Glossary of Terms

Account: The term employed in this project for a case formulation for executive coaching. Derived from definition of case formulation below.

Agency: Individuals are considered to have agency in that they can choose to act or not, to set goals and pursue action plans to achieve them, including plans for self-change.

Ambiguity: There is information available for decision-making but there are multiple interpretations of the information or situation.

Case formulation (CF): The definition developed in this project is that a CF represents an individualised explanatory account of the dynamic interacting factors that predispose, precipitate or maintain specific behaviours or situations and those that may enable, support or catalyse change.

Complexity: Complexity is the interaction of many highly interconnected heterogeneous variables that can rapidly change states, often in response to each other, creating outcomes that unfold over multiple timeframes.

Context: All interventions take place within the context of the individual and their environment. There are many interactions between context factors and mechanisms that would lead to different outcomes for people in different contexts.

CMO configurations: Configurations of context, mechanism and outcomes that form the basis of theory in RE research.

Critical Realism (CR): The philosophy of science that provides an alternative to the duality between positivism and constructivism. Critical realism posits an external world that exists independent of our identification or observation. There is also a dimension of reality that is socially constructed.

Domains: In a CR ontology there are three domains of reality; empirical domain – experiences and perceptions; actual – events and action; and deep – structures, mechanisms and causal powers (Ackroyd & Fleetwood 2000).

Emergence: According to Bhaskar (1998), emergence is a characteristic of both the natural and human worlds. CR has a view of reality as a hierarchy of stratified systems and entities. Interactions between entities at one level cause entities or phenomena to emerge at another level.

Entity: Can be tangible such as material things, people or systems, or intangible such as attitudes and relationships. These entities interact within and between different levels of reality to cause events and other entities to emerge.

Events: The result of interacting entities causing change of some description in an entity or structure. In the case of coaching, examples of events include change in belief, assumptions, behaviours, patterns of interacting, or decisions and specific actions.

Implementation theory: Theories consisting of specific and detailed CMO configurations that articulate how a programme is delivered in practice.

Mechanism: The ways in which entities interact by means of their powers, and their susceptibilities to the actions and powers of other entities, to cause events. It is these mechanisms rather than the entity itself that generates events (Easton 2010).

Programme theory: A level of theory in the form of CMO configurations that are at a level of abstraction that they apply to multiple programme situations (Pawson & Tilley 1997).

Realistic Evaluation (RE): Based on the work of Pawson and Tilley (1997), the research methodology that is employed in this project. As a form of evaluation of social programmes the RE methodology attempts to identify patterns of outcomes in specific contexts and the mechanisms that are associated with those outcomes. The RE methodology attempts to identify what makes programmes works for which people in what contexts.

Realms: In a CR ontology the world is seen as organised into hierarchical realms or strata. Through the interactions of entities, an event in one realm may emerge as a mechanism or event in another realm.

Structures: Social structures are configurations of causal mechanisms such as social norms, values, rules, powers or practices. They are considered social because they only exist because of human activity. Social structures can enable or set limits to actions of individuals.

Uncertainty: A lack of information to inform decision-making

VUCA: A term initially adopted by the US War College (Barber 1996) to describe the strategic environment and stands for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The term has been adopted by business writers and leaders to describe the current business environment.

Volatility: Unpredictable and rapid change.

Abstract

The purpose of this project was to increase coaching effectiveness in complex assignments, such as those that have an objective of increasing an executive's capability to navigate complexity or where the coaching is cross-cultural. In the context of complex assignments, a flexible framework is required that supports the coach in the process of developing an individualised programme that meets the needs of the coachee in their specific environment.

It is argued that the concept of case formulation can be applied to executive coaching to provide the foundation for a flexible coaching framework. Through this project, the Purpose, Account, Intervention, Reflect (PAIR) framework was developed, applied and evaluated with 12 coaching case studies in Australia and South East Asia.

A Realistic Evaluation methodology (Pawson & Tilley 1997) was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching and to identify what factors made the coaching effective and in which contexts. Outcomes were measured using a 360° survey, pre and post-coaching interviews with the coachee and their manager, and coach and coachee session notes and reflections. The mechanisms of coaching and significant context factors were identified using session notes and reflections, and post-coaching interviews. Successful coaching outcomes were identified in all 12 cases along with 17 key mechanisms of coaching effectiveness. Based on these findings, hypotheses regarding what makes coaching effective for which people and in what contexts were developed.

This study demonstrates that the use of the PAIR framework facilitates the application of a case formulation approach to executive coaching and its use assists coaches in creating individualised coaching programmes. This study also demonstrates how the PAIR framework is flexible enough to meet a range of different contexts, including complex executive development and cross-cultural coaching assignments. Different combinations of mechanisms of coaching effectiveness were identified in each of the 12 case studies assignments, reinforcing the need to develop individualised programmes to meet the specific needs of each coachee. The implications of these findings for executive coaching practice and future research are considered and recommendations made for both practising coaches and researchers in the field.

1 Introduction, Background and Context

1.1 *Introduction*

People in today's organisations face increasing levels of complexity, whether they work for government organisations, large corporations or small enterprises. An IBM chief executive officer (CEO) study (2010) found that 79% of executives anticipated that they would need to deal with increasing complexity in the future and more than half doubted that they had the capability to handle it. Due to this increased complexity, executives need to develop different capabilities and ways of operating and perhaps even the existing paradigm of management needs to be reinvented (Hamel 2007).

One of the interventions organisations use to develop leaders' capabilities is executive coaching, which has become a mainstream development activity in many western and developed economies. However, the evidence base for coaching is still in its infancy and practice has preceded the development of the theoretical and empirical foundation. There are many models and approaches to coaching in use but there is a need to connect practitioners to the peer-reviewed literature and develop shared frameworks of practice (Grant, Cavanagh, Parker & Passmore 2010). For coaches working with leaders facing this increased complexity, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the capabilities these executives may require, how to enable the development of these capabilities and how to navigate the complexity of developmental coaching assignments.

This doctor of professional studies programme is entitled, 'Executive coaching in an era of complexity'. It contributes to the research in the coaching field through the development of an approach that can assist coaches to work effectively in more complex executive coaching assignments that go beyond skills or performance coaching, such as developing leaders' abilities to navigate complexity.

This first section outlines the project background and context, the research purpose and aims, an overview of the project and the primary outcomes. An outline of the thesis is also provided.

1.2 The research in the context of my professional career

Most executives and executive coaches would agree that today's business environment is characterised by rapid change, turbulence and volatility, all of which are exacerbated by hyper-connectivity, disruptive technological advancements and increasing globalisation. Prior to becoming an executive coach, I experienced first-hand some of the challenges and opportunities of this business environment. From the late 1980s I worked for 14 years in information technology (IT) sales and management roles in the UK, Europe and Australia. I began work in this field just as the potential of the internet began to be realised and I witnessed how the commercialisation of the internet gave rise to new industries, changed how we communicate, provided access to a wealth of information and transformed business models.

As my career developed and I took on more senior roles, I experienced the complexity of managing teams of people, as well as the demands of working in a fast-paced, rapidly-growing industry. I recognise now that as leaders we received little or no support in effectively leading our people and there was little time for reflecting on what we were doing and our role in driving change. There was an unquestioned, underlying belief that all technological advances were positive even though we often witnessed the adverse effects on individuals as jobs disappeared and companies re-structured.

After 14 years in this industry I began to question my career choice and to look for alternatives. Having completed a bachelor of education degree, I took a graduate-level sales role as I was attracted to the potential financial rewards of the IT industry. I now felt out of step with many people in an industry that appeared to be chasing financial rewards and meeting growth targets to the detriment of customers and other stakeholders. Some of the business practices were unethical with customers being sold equipment they did not need, claims being made for the functionality of technology that the equipment could not deliver, or false orders being placed in the system to meet a sales target. I developed a reputation for ethical business practice with my customers and this was part of my success. However, putting up objections to any unethical practices put me in conflict with senior leaders in my organisation.

During 2002, I heard a radio programme about the coaching industry and this was the start of my interest in the coaching field. I felt that my skills and capabilities could be used to benefit others and to assist them in dealing with some of the challenges

that I had experienced in my career. After researching the options for coach training I discovered the Masters of Coaching Psychology and Human Resources Management at the University of Sydney. Being accepted into this programme started my transition to an executive coaching career and began an ongoing period of personal and professional development.

On completion of my master's degree I set up my own consulting business delivering coaching and other leadership development services. After several years I was offered an opportunity to move back into the IT industry as an internal coach for a large multinational IT company. This initial role grew to a larger strategy and leadership position, managing a team of organisational development consultants. During the time I spent in this role I experienced the demands of working at a senior level in a large organisation, as well as the challenges of driving change in an organisation that was undergoing significant industry shifts that threatened the existing business model and the future of the organisation.

After three years in this role I re-established my practice as an independent executive coach and also contracted as an associate coach with a leadership consulting company, MB Consulting. My clients were predominantly senior executives in large and medium Australian or multinational enterprises. At this stage, I made the decision to commence this doctor of professional studies programme. I was keen to continue to develop my skills as a coach and equip myself to work effectively with executives.

The needs of my coachees ranged from working towards clearly articulated goals or performance outcomes to more ambiguous issues such as increasing their effectiveness and leadership capability. In the latter types of engagements, I became increasingly aware that often what my coachees were dealing with was the need to process more information, to handle more complexity, to develop innovative solutions, or to take different perspectives on themselves and the world in which they operated. For example, several coachees had been promoted to new roles that required greater ability to influence across the organisation and they struggled to handle the ambiguity of needing to achieve results through people outside their direct control and in the absence of clear objectives.

I recognised the need for a more sophisticated and complex approach that would meet the developmental needs of these coachees. Identifying goals and action plans

to achieve them, which was the basis of much of my coaching, was a skill that many senior executives had mastered. Instead, what they required was assistance with handling complex situations where the goal and actions may not be clear, where there were many ways of achieving the goal and where they would have to overcome numerous challenges, including their current patterns of thinking and behaving, to reach a successful outcome. With a strong theoretical foundation gained from my master's degree, and seven years of coaching experience, I had a base of tools and techniques on which to draw. However, I recognised that I needed to continue my professional development in order to work effectively within these less well-defined coaching assignments.

In early 2012 I was offered the position of managing director for MB Consulting in Singapore. During 2012 I established the business operations in Singapore and moved there permanently towards the end of 2012.

This move provided the opportunity to experience another of the key aspects of working in today's business environment: the need to work cross-culturally and with a global perspective. Singapore is at the heart of the international business environment with many multinationals basing their Asia Pacific headquarters in the city-state. The Singapore government has positioned the country as a place for international business and has encouraged major corporations to bring in skilled executives to help build local leadership capacity and capability. There are approximately 180,000 expatriates in Singapore (Singapore Government 2015). Executive coaches here need to be able to work with coachees from many different cultures and backgrounds, not just from South East Asia, but from all over the globe.

1.3 Project Purpose, Aims and Outline

It was within this professional context that I developed my research project, which is entitled "Enabling leaders to navigate complexity: An executive coaching framework". The primary purpose of the project was to increase coaching effectiveness in more complex developmental coaching engagements such as those that aim to foster an executive's ability to navigate complexity. The purpose was to increase not only my own capability in this area but also to assist other coaches become more effective in these types of assignments.

Assignments that target the development of a leader's capabilities are often themselves complex and existing models may not match the complexity of the task. Therefore, the aims of the project were 1) to research and develop a framework for coaching that can facilitate effective coaching in more complex coaching assignments, and 2) to investigate what happens in coaching assignments when this framework is used. The application of a suitable coaching framework is one factor in increasing the effectiveness of coaching assignments. It is hypothesised that another factor is the coach's capabilities and therefore a further aim was 3) to explore the effect on and mechanisms of the professional development of the coach in completing the project and using the coaching framework.

The research project followed a four phase design and was based on a realistic evaluation (RE) research methodology (Pawson & Tilley 1997). This four phase research cycle is illustrated below (figure 1, p.17).

Phase one

This phase involved exploring the context for the coaching and the research project: understanding how executives experience their environment as complex and identifying the capabilities that they need to be effective in navigating this complexity. The primary activities comprised a literature review and interviews with executives and coaches. This phase also involved exploring approaches, models and different coaching perspectives in order to develop a coaching framework and approach that could be used in phase three of the research.

Phase two

In an RE methodology (Pawson & Tilley 1997) a programme theory is developed that articulates what makes the programme or intervention effective for which people and in what circumstances. These theories take the form of hypotheses that articulate the core of ideas that underpin the intervention being evaluated, in this case the coaching programme. These theories are the starting point for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention and are revised based on the results of the next phase, an outcome study.

Phase Three

In phase three of the project, two sets of coaching case studies were conducted with a total of 12 executives. The first set of five case studies was conducted with executives in Australian organisations and was used to pilot the coaching framework, evaluate the outcomes and refine the programme and implementation theories. The second set of case studies was conducted with seven executives in Singapore, Mongolia and Indonesia.

Phase Four

The final phase involved analysing the data, reviewing the coaching framework, and updating the associated programme and implementation theories.

Coach case study

In order to meet the third objective and explore my own development as a coach I also created a coach case study. I adapted the RE approach (Pawson & Tilley 1997) to identify how completing the research had enabled the changes I observed in my knowledge, skills and coaching ability.

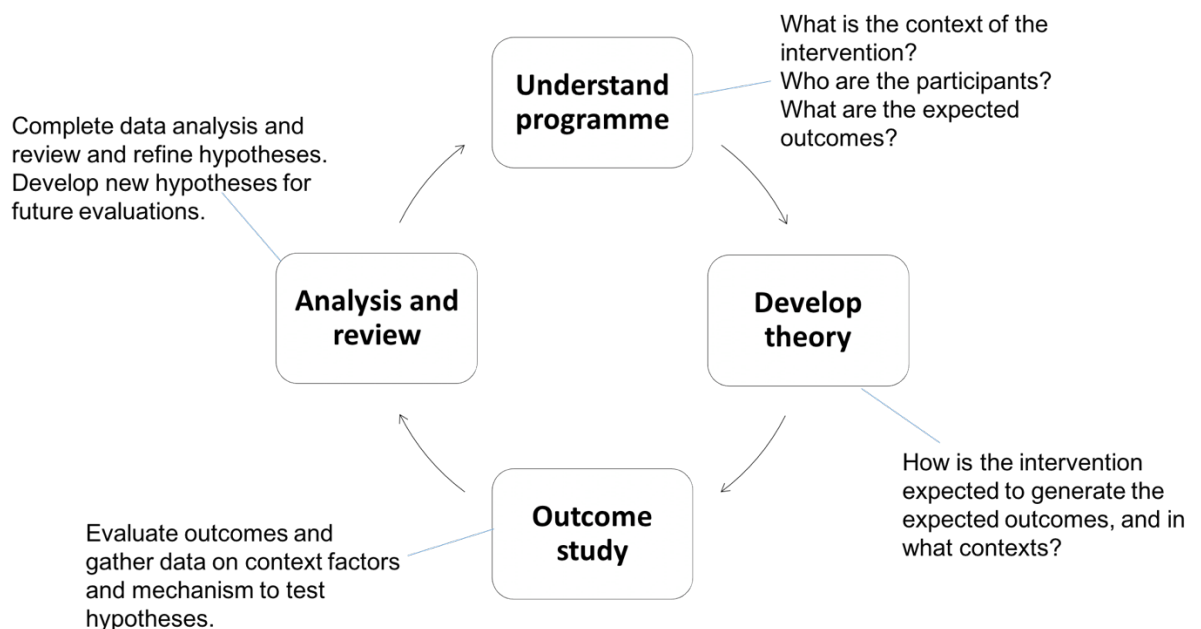


Figure 1 Four-phase research cycle

1.4 Defining Complexity

Having introduced the project in the context of my professional practice, this section considers how I use the term complexity in my coaching context and for the purposes of this project.

The term complexity is often used to describe today's business environment but few authors offer a definition. In the first phase of my research I developed a definition that is used throughout this project. This definition was developed by drawing on the literature from the fields of systems thinking, complexity sciences and leadership theory, as well as incorporating my own experiences and the perspectives of business leaders.

I took as a starting point the features of complex systems that are described in the literature from the systems field (e.g. Marion & Uhl-Bien 2001; Stacey 1996, 2007; Wheatley 1999). The first element is that complex systems involve many variables that are interconnected, not just in a linear fashion, but each variable being connected to many others. Interactions between these interconnected variables can cause them to change in response to each other, sending ripples throughout the system and creating feedback and feed-forward loops. This web of interconnections and interactions makes cause and effect hard to detect and can produce unintended consequences.

Systems theories do not explicitly identify the several time-related aspects that contribute to complexity. There is a factor of tempo or pace (Harvey & Novicevic 2001) to complexity. The tempo dimension represents the speed and intensity of interactions and the rate of change of the variables (Adam 2000). The second element is that of temporality, with events in the past and present creating effects that unfold in the present and future. Some of these effects will create different outcomes in multiple timelines with some effects being felt immediately and others not seen until well into the future. Additionally, many interactions are happening simultaneously causing multiple events, changes and responses at any one time.

In complex systems the variables can be heterogeneous and cross many boundaries, for example complex problems in an organisation may involve multiple departments, geographies, stakeholders, functions and markets. Complex problems do not come neatly packaged in one discipline (Spence 2012) but are more likely to require a

transdisciplinary approach that applies knowledge from a number of fields to provide an effective solution (Ramadier 2004).

The following definition was developed to reflect these key elements of complexity:

Complexity is the interaction of many highly interconnected heterogeneous variables that can rapidly change states, often in response to each other, creating outcomes that unfold over multiple timeframes.

There are many contexts in today's business environment that exemplify this definition of complexity. There are innumerable interconnected variables at play within and external to an organisation. Often variables are not well defined, connections are not clear, and many of the variables take different states and change in response to each other. As effects of these responses ripple through the complex system, unexpected outcomes unfold over multiple timeframes, making cause and effect hard to identify. The 2008 global crisis in the banking system can be seen as an example of an unexpected outcome from a highly complex environment, the effects of which are still rippling through the world's economic system in 2015.

Other key terms such as volatility, uncertainty, and ambiguity are often used in combination or as synonyms for complexity. The US Army War College adopted the term VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) to describe the strategic environment in which they were preparing army leaders (Barber 1992) and this term has now been picked up by some in the management education field to apply to the current business environment, (e.g. Horney, Pasmore, & O'Shea 2010; Johanson 2010). Rather than being synonymous with complexity, the conditions described by these other terms are often the result of high levels of complexity.

Executives often face volatility in their business environment such as major shifts in customer-buying behaviour, the entrance of new competitors with disruptive products and technologies, and sudden fluctuations in stock markets. In navigating these conditions executives will often have to make decisions in the face of both uncertainty and ambiguity. They are simultaneously dealing with a lack of information in some areas and with multiple interpretations of the information that is available (Weick 1995).

These conditions can equally apply to the assignments in which coaches are engaged and it is the complexity of coaching that is considered next.

1.5 Coaching and Complexity

Executive coaching is enacted within the context of the complexity of the business environment and from my own experience, I recognised that some coaching assignments were more complex than others. Cavanagh and Lane (2012) have suggested that a model originally developed by Stacey (1996) is a useful way of thinking about the complexity of different organisational contexts and their implications for coaching. This model, known as the certainty/agreement matrix, categorised situations in which managers needed to make decisions along a horizontal axis representing the degree of certainty of prediction (of outcomes), against a vertical axis of degree of agreement between the decision-makers. Cavanagh and Lane (2012) have used this model to identify three different coaching spaces. At one extreme is the rational space (high predictability, high agreement about what to do), and at the other, a chaotic space where there is low predictability and low agreement. Between these two extremes lies the complex zone. Associated with each space are recommended approaches to coaching. In the rational space, evidence-based practice derived from empirical research can be applied; emergent models are needed for the complex space; and approaches that create structure and contain anxiety are needed in the chaotic space (Cavanagh & Lane 2012).

Stacey (2012a) has argued that the model has been used in ways that he never intended and that it is impossible for executives or coaches to know in advance what a situation or coaching engagement will entail. I initially agreed with Cavanagh and Lane (2012) that the model could be a useful way of categorising coaching assignments. However, in considering my experience of executive coaching assignments and as my project has progressed, my tendency is to agree with Stacey (2012a) in that it is impossible to know in advance how an assignment will unfold. An assignment that appears to be relatively simple can quickly become complex or chaotic as the engagement progresses. Perhaps it is more useful to approach executive coaching assignments with the assumption that they will contain interacting elements of all spaces, as suggested by Snowden and Boone's (2007) approach to leadership and complexity, and that each case will require multiple approaches to address multiple factors.

Rather than relying on a variant of Stacey's model to define what makes a coaching case complex, my definition of complexity can be applied to executive coaching and leadership development. There are likely to be many interacting factors involved, not only related to the executive themselves but also within the context in which that leader is situated. If this is the case then as Stacey (2012a) suggests, all coaching situations require mindful, reflective responsiveness and I argue that what is required is a framework that will facilitate this responsiveness.

1.6 Complexity and Transdisciplinarity

As mentioned above, complex problems are unlikely to come neatly packaged in the domain of one discipline. Instead these issues cross the traditional boundaries between increasingly interconnected and interdependent domains (Maguire 2015), as well as spanning different realms of reality (Ramadier 2004). As a result, complex problems will often involve the interactions of elements from physical, social and behavioural domains (Ramadier 2004.) These types of problems have been termed 'wicked' problems (Brown, Harris & Russell 2010). A 'wicked' problem is not morally wicked, but is diabolical in that traditional forms of problem-solving are insufficient and often generate further issues. There are no final solutions to wicked problems, only those solutions that are the best discernible at this time (Brown et al 2010).

A traditional approach to understanding and solving complex problems has been to simplify the problem, often through the lens of one discipline. Problems are also simplified by decontextualizing the subject instead of investigating the subject as it is embedded in context (Horlick-Jones & Simes 2004). This disciplinary approach often contains no reference to or explanation of the complexity of the subjects being investigated. Ramadier (2004) has argued that, "Complexity can be approached only through transdisciplinarity" (p.425). Similarly, Brown et al (2010) argue that wicked problems required novel and creative methods of investigation, one of which is transdisciplinarity.

Transdisciplinarity can be considered a conceptual framework for investigation that provides a comprehensive response to complex problems. A transdisciplinary approach spans traditional boundaries in order to create new knowledge and arrive at creative solutions to a range of problems at local, regional and global level (Maguire 2015). In this approach, researchers from a range of disciplines work together, along with other external stakeholders, to solve a real-world problem (Brown et al 2010.)

Transdisciplinarity is differentiated from multidisciplinary; the combination of specialisations used to address a specific issue, and interdisciplinary; the common ground between disciplines which over time forms a new discipline (Brown et al 2010). Transdisciplinary inquiry goes beyond collaboration and co-operation to combine elements of different methodologies into a single approach, where inputs and outputs are exchanged across disciplinary boundaries to achieve an integration of knowledge. This approach also forges connections between scholarly inquiry and the tacit and experiential knowledge of practitioners (Horlick-Jones & Simes 2004).

Transdisciplinarity recognises that different levels of reality exist and that a complex problem will span multiple realms. In response to this challenge, transdisciplinary research attempts to articulate the relationships and interactions between realms in order to understand the whole system (Ramadier 2004).

Academic disciplines are organised and perpetuated by a shared set of beliefs and assumptions about how the world works. These beliefs and assumptions represent the discipline's worldview and approach to knowledge construction (Dovers 2010). While a shared worldview facilitates communication between members of the discipline it also creates institutionalised barriers (Arabena 2010). These barriers exist not only between disciplines but between researchers and practitioners, or between different knowledge traditions. Where single disciplinary approaches select one worldview and one approach to the construction of knowledge, transdisciplinary approaches articulate the different worldviews that make up the context of a complex problem and apply diverse sources of evidence drawn from multiple knowledge traditions (Brown 2010).

Different cultures may have different knowledge traditions. For example, Western science favours reductionism and analytical methods and separates observations into separate disciplines. In contrast, traditional knowledge systems may favour a more holistic approach (Mazzocchi 2006). Within a culture, the dominant forms of knowledge develop genres, protocols and canons that devalue other modes of knowledge (Klein 2004). The transdisciplinary vision is that no one culture is privileged over any other culture. Therefore, the transdisciplinary approach is described as inherently transcultural (Klein 2004).

The disciplinary approach can be seen in many approaches to leadership development that attempt to reduce the number of elements or factors that are considered, focusing on one or two key aspects of the leader and their development. Much of the existing leadership development literature is written from a specific perspective, for example the complexity leadership literature, (e.g. Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey 2007; Wheatley 1999). Most authors from this perspective emphasise the different leadership behaviours that the leader should use in specific situations but rarely considers the psychological perspective of what might be involved to develop this leadership versatility. Contributions from different fields of psychology or schools of psychology tend to look at the leader and leadership through one perspective such as personality factors, (e.g. Hogan, Curphy & Hogan 1994), with limited consideration given to the specific context in which the leader is situated.

In conducting this research, rather than simplify the complexity of the topic through a narrow perspective, I have chosen to look at the issue through a transdisciplinary lens and consider a range of perspectives in order to build a richer picture of not only the capabilities needed to navigate complexity but also the approaches to developing these capabilities. Taking multiple perspectives and looking for diverse views is one of the key themes that emerged from the literature review as an approach to navigating complexity. I argue that this should apply to the coach who is working with the executive as much as the leader themselves. This idea is supported by a concept from the field of cybernetics, in the form of Ashby's (1956) law of requisite variety, which states that only variety can match or control variety. In resolving complex issues the complexity of the solution needs to match the complexity of the situation, or risk being consumed by the problem.

For a coach working in the complex field of developing leaders and their capabilities, it is argued in this thesis that a more complex, integrated, transdisciplinary view of coaching and the coachee's case is required. Many of the issues which executives face are wicked problems and the coach needs a more complex view of the coachee and their context than the application of a single perspective or approach can provide. This may require integrating coaching approaches that span domains of knowledge and that also assist in translating theory into the practical solutions that executives can apply.

1.7 Critical Realism: A Differentiated and Stratified View of Reality

While the potential for gaining a richer picture of a coachee and their situation is provided by using a transdisciplinary approach there is a risk of doing 'cookbook' coaching or research; mixing and matching ingredients from different disciplines without recognising that these perspectives are based on entirely different views of reality and without creating a coherent view.

The scientific paradigm of critical realism (CR) can be helpful in articulating the different domains and associated methodologies and methods as well as the coherent integration of these multiple perspectives. There are many ways in which CR can be described (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen & Karlsson 2002) and this section outlines my interpretation of key aspects of CR, some of the key terminology and how this perspective relates to this project.

The scientific paradigm of CR provides an alternative to the duality of the debate between positivism and constructivism. CR believes that there is an external world that exists independent of our awareness of it; an entity can exist without observation or identification. There is also a dimension of reality that is socially constructed, or socially real (Danermark et al. 2002).

Reality is seen as a hierarchy of stratified systems and entities with each lower level being made up of less complex systems and entities, and being constrained by the more complex systems and entities above. In this way the world is organised into strata or realms that contain the 'stuff' of the lower levels but cannot be reduced to it (Moll 2004). Emergence characterises both the natural and the human worlds (Bhaskar 1998) as interactions between phenomena within one realm cause new phenomena to emerge at another level.

In relation to the human or social world there is some debate among critical realists as to whether the social science strata emerges from the psychological or vice versa (Moll 2004). Collier (1994) has proposed an alternative view that both psychology and social strata should be considered as separate branches at the same level and interactions between psychological and social factors may cause the emergence of new phenomena in either realm (Moll 2004). Relating this perspective to the leadership field, the psychological elements of the leader may interact with factors in

the social realm, such as a cultural norm, to generate a pattern of leadership behaviours.

A critical realist ontology holds that three domains of reality exist: empirical – experiences and perceptions; actual – events and actions; and ‘deep’ – structures, mechanisms and causal powers (Ackroyd & Fleetwood 2000). Emergence is also a factor of these domains. The interaction of entities at one level leads to the emergence of other mechanisms or events in another stratum. Entities can be tangible such as material things, people or actual systems or intangible such as attitudes and relationships (Easton 2010). When these events are experienced, perceived or observed they become empirical fact (Danermark et. al 2001). In some cases the cause can be observed to have generated the effect and in other cases the causes are less obvious and people may not be aware of their existence (Kempster & Parry 2011).

Viewing the field of leadership development through this lens provides a richer picture of what is involved in building a leader’s capability and effecting behavioural change. Leadership behaviour is likely to be a result of interactions at multiple levels. The leader’s values, beliefs and personality factors (deep domain) interact to lead to patterns of thinking and behaving (actual domain) that are experienced by themselves and others (empirical domain). A leader may or may not have the self-awareness to understand how their behaviour emerges from factors in the deep domain. Some of the factors are in the conscious mind and an individual is aware of their thinking but there are factors in the deep domain of which they are unconscious. Taking this perspective, sustainable shifts in behaviour are likely to require changes at multiple levels.

In this example there is no consideration of either social or biological mechanisms that may play a role in enabling or constraining the psychological factors. The psychological elements entail not only the conscious and unconscious psychological factors but also the causal mechanisms at other strata; biological and social (Moll 2004). For example, physiological effects of stress along with the dominant corporate culture of the organisation and the responses to the leader by other people may all interact with the psychological elements to generate patterns of behaviour.

1.7.1 Mechanisms and Events

Mechanisms are the ways in which entities by means of their powers and susceptibilities to the actions of other entities interact to cause events (Easton 2010). It is these rather than the entity itself that generates events. 'Events', are described as having two essential characteristics; that they take place at a point or interval in time and that they involve change in an entity or structure. Events could take place over a period of minutes, days or even years (Mingers 2011).

Pawson and Tilley (1997) provide an example of this in the evaluation of social change programmes. It is the interaction between the structures, powers and liabilities of the entities involved that generate events such as changes to behaviour. In this case the entities include the programme, people involved, and social structures. Therefore, they argue, the power of a programme to generate new choices is not in the programme itself but in how it comes together with people in their specific context.

Relating this concept to executive coaching it can be argued that a coaching intervention or approach does not generate change on its own. It is only through the interaction of the coach, the coaching intervention, the coachee and environment that any mechanism to facilitate change may be triggered. These changes may take place within a session or over a period of months and years.

In coaching interactions an event could mean changes in beliefs and meaning-making for a coachee, which acts as a mechanism for changed behaviours in certain interactions, or vice versa. Both the change in beliefs and the changed behaviour could be considered events happening in different time frames and different domains. Considering a leader's development over a longer time frame, the event could be seen as the increased ability to navigate complexity.

1.7.2 The Role of Structure & Agency

Two further concepts are also a key part of the CR perspective. Society consists of two specific types of entities; social structures and acting people (Fleetwood 2005). Social structures refer to configurations of causal mechanisms such as social norms, values, rules, powers, resources or practices. They are social because they exist only because of human activity, although they can still exist independently of our identification or knowledge of them (Fleetwood 2005).

Social structures have causal powers but in themselves, cannot take action; only people can act. While people do have free will, can set and pursue goals and have the capacity for self-change, social structures can either enable or set limits to these actions (Danermark et al. 2002). There is an ongoing interaction between social structures and individual agents and the social structures are either reproduced or transformed by these actions. Therefore, if people are aware of the social structures and are in a position of influence they can set out to transform the structure through their actions (Fleetwood 2005).

In terms of this research, executive coaching is taking place in the context of organisations that have existing social structures that may enable or constrain the executive's ability to make changes. In addition, other social structures such as the broader cultural norms and expectations of leaders are further entities with which the coachee will interact. The executives participating in the study have agency; they can choose whether to pursue changes, select which avenues to explore and what actions or changes they will not pursue. However, these actions will be either enabled or constrained by the social structures with which they interact.

For a coach working in this environment, a simple coaching approach is unlikely to consider the multiple interacting factors at different strata and domains, the structures, and the executive's ability or motivation to act. Taking this multi-layered and complex view of reality provides a rich picture of the mechanisms, structures and events that are involved in developing leaders to effectively navigate complexity. If the topic is only investigated by considering one or two factors or mechanisms, there may be significant parts of the picture missing.

This perspective also offers the potential for understanding why interventions may be effective with some people in some situations. Organisations conducting large scale leadership development programmes may find that the same programme does not achieve the same outcome or level of success for all participants. This is the result of the multiple interacting factors involved for each person. A person in a role that is challenging their current capability, who believes that change is possible and whose manager supports their development is perhaps more likely to benefit from the programme than their colleague who believes that their existing approach is effective and whose manager is not interested in their development.

1.7.3 *Applying a CR Perspective*

There is no one methodology or set of methods that are recommended for a CR perspective or transdisciplinary approach. What is required is an approach that enables the exploration of a research question at multiple levels of reality and across domains of knowledge.

An approach that is well suited to a CR and transdisciplinary perspective is a methodology based on Realistic Evaluation (RE) (Pawson & Tilley 1997) and this was selected as the most appropriate approach for this project. The RE methodology provides a framework for not only exploring the outcomes of the coaching case studies using the coaching framework, but also investigating the mechanisms involved in generating those outcomes. There is limited research using the RE approach and none in the coaching field and this study provides an example of how it can be applied to evaluate coaching interventions. This methodology was selected as not only is it consistent with my philosophical perspectives, it also provides insight into some of the interacting factors that are involved in the complex coaching system. A description of the RE methodology and the rationale for this approach is included in section 4.2.

CR research investigates causality but does not aim to generate simple linear 'x' causes 'y' explanations. Instead, investigation in a CR paradigm attempts to develop 'thick explanations', which require an account of the set of interacting mechanisms that could have a tendency to cause an outcome in a particular context (Fleetwood & Heskeith 2010). In coaching practice, Corrie and Lane (2010) have argued that case formulation (CF) is also an attempt to develop an explanatory account of interacting factors that assists a coach in making sense of a particular coaching assignment and that can be used to guide decisions about how to proceed. In coaching as in other forms of applied psychology, a CF can act as a framework for evaluating the information you have, identifying gaps in the information, identifying the priorities for change and reflecting on the challenges that arise in dealing with change processes (Corrie & Lane 2010).

In developing the coaching approach based on the application of CF, it became clear that a CR perspective could also be applied to develop a fuller picture of the coaching assignment and possible approaches to working with the coachee. Hence, a critical realist CF framework is the foundation of the coaching framework developed in this

project. The CF approach is used to develop an explanatory account of the mechanisms that are producing or could produce an outcome in a particular context. It provides the framework for considering the possible web of interacting factors at work for a coachee in their specific context and assists the coach and coachee in making decisions about what coaching process or specific coaching interventions may be helpful.

1.8 Project Outcomes

The purpose of this project was to increase my coaching effectiveness in more complex developmental coaching assignments such as increasing an executive's ability to navigate complexity which, in itself, is a complex task. The primary outcome from this research has been the development of the Purpose, Account, Intervention, Reflection (PAIR) framework and the experiential learning involved in its development and application.

The PAIR framework provides a guide to the application of a critical realist CF approach. This approach was developed and evaluated through case studies with 12 executives in different contexts, and the results from these case studies also provide insight into what made the coaching effective for which people and in what contexts. There is minimal literature regarding the application of CF to coaching and this project contributes to the coaching field by demonstrating how a CF approach can be applied to executive coaching.

One of the significant context factors for more than half of the case studies was that the coaching was cross-cultural. Participants in the case studies came from five different countries and seven of the case studies took part in Singapore in both large Singaporean companies and European multi-nationals with Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore. The research of cross-cultural coaching is at an early stage, with the majority of research in the executive coaching field conducted in a Western context. This initial study makes a contribution to the field in highlighting some of the areas that may be different, how we may need to adapt coaching to suit different cultures and cross-cultural contexts as well as pointing to areas for future research.

Completing the doctoral programme has increased my capability and skills as a coach. I am more confident in dealing with complex assignments and have an

approach that can be applied across a broad range of coaching assignments including cross-cultural coaching contexts.

From a personal development perspective, there is also evidence of growth in my complexity of mind. According to constructive-developmental theorists, adults mature through stages known as action-logics (Cook-Greuter 2008), with each action-logic representing an increasingly complex and coherent stage of meaning-making. Section 3.4 provides more detail on this perspective on adult development. Using the Sentence Completion Test Integral – Maturity Assessment Profile (SCTi-MAP) (Cook-Greuter 2006) I measured my action-logic at the start and beginning of the project. The results indicated growth within the individualist action-logic (stage 4/5). Outcomes associated with growth within this action-logic are an increased ability to see multiple perspectives, greater systems-thinking capacity and increased awareness of cultural and personal conditioning in self and others. These outcomes are documented in the coach case study in section 6.6.

A secondary outcome from this project is the insight I gained into the capabilities that may enable both leaders and coaches to effectively navigate complexity. In order to capture these insights an additional framework was developed that summarises these capabilities – the Navigator framework. This framework attempts to encapsulate the many factors involved in developing leaders and coaches to work in a VUCA world and can inform future practice and research into coach and leader development. This framework has already been useful in designing leadership development programmes for my organisational clients.

1.9 Document Structure

This thesis describes the research process, results and conclusions, and is structured in eight sections:

- Section one (this section): The context and background for the project.
- Section two: The purpose, aims and objectives of the research.
- Section three: A review of the current literature relating to leadership and complexity along with the relevant literature from the coaching, CF and reflective practice fields that informed the development of the PAIR framework.

- Section four: An overview of the RE methodology and the associated methods and project activity.
- Section five: A discussion of the ethical considerations for the research.
- Section six: The research findings and a discussion of these findings.
- Section seven: The conclusions drawn are described along with recommendations for both practice and further research.
- The final section is a reflective learning account of the process of completing this doctor of professional studies programme including the challenges overcome, key insights, and how I will use the knowledge gained from the programme in the future.

2 Research Purpose, Aims and Questions

2.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of this project was to increase coaching effectiveness in more complex engagements, such as developing an executive's ability to navigate complexity or cross-cultural coaching. The purpose was not only to improve my own ability to work effectively with these assignments but to also add to the knowledge base in the coaching industry in terms of the findings from this project and making recommendations for future research, coaching practice, and coach development and training.

2.2 Aims

As a practitioner-researcher it was important that the project outcomes could be applied to executive coaching practice. I identified that a good approach to achieving this was to research and develop a coaching framework as a way of representing an overall approach. As a practitioner, understanding the outcomes of any coaching approach is important but equally important is to develop some understanding of what might make the coaching effective for whom and in what contexts. Therefore, the research had the following two aims:

1. To research and develop a framework that can facilitate effective coaching in complex assignments, which in the case of this research is developing the capability of executives to navigate complexity.
2. To investigate what happens in executive coaching engagements that use this coaching framework, not only in terms of outcomes but also in identifying any patterns of mechanisms and context factors that lead to those outcomes.

The coaching framework is one factor involved in increasing coaching effectiveness and another factor is the capability of the coach. A third aim of the research was to investigate my development as a coach through completing the project:

3. To explore the professional development outcomes and mechanisms of development for a coach in completing the research project and using the coaching framework.

2.3 Research Questions

The first research question is 'what coaching framework can facilitate coaching effectiveness in complex coaching assignments?' (Q1).

Given the research is grounded in a critical realist perspective, rather than seeking a simple cause and effect relationship in terms of the framework and the outcomes, the project also sought to develop a thick explanation of what might make the coaching framework effective in some cases with some people through identifying the interacting factors involved in the complex system of executive coaching.

- (Q2) What are the outcomes of using the coaching framework with a group of executives?
- (Q3) What patterns of mechanisms that tend to generate outcomes in specific contexts can be identified?

The final research question relates to the development of the coach and understanding the developmental outcomes as well as the mechanisms of that development:

- (Q4) What is the developmental effect on and the mechanisms of this development for the coach in the research, development and use of this coaching framework?

With these questions in mind, the research project was designed to develop not only a coaching framework, but to understand the effect of its use and develop theories about what makes the coaching framework effective or not.

3 Review of the Relevant Literature

3.1 *Purpose of the Literature Review*

This literature review serves three purposes, the first of which is understanding the context for the coaching programmes in terms of approaches to leadership development and leading in complex environments. Secondly, an understanding of the capabilities needed to be effective in navigating complexity was required in order to understand the potential outcomes of a coaching intervention and to select appropriate measures for the project. Thirdly, this literature review sets this project in the context of the existing research in the field of executive coaching, case formulation and reflective practice, which all influenced the development of the PAIR framework.

Authors on leadership come from a number of different fields including systems theory psychology, management and business. Each of these fields can offer different perspectives on leadership and leadership development and some background on the different perspectives is provided. The objective of this part of the literature review is to point to the key concepts and different perspectives that have influenced my approach to leadership development in this project rather than provide a comprehensive history of leadership and leadership development theory.

In reviewing the literature, it became clear that the capabilities required for navigating complexity that different authors identified was dependent on the perspective from which they were writing. Each perspective appeared to have something to offer but did not portray the whole picture. For example, complexity theorists offered advice on leadership styles and behaviours but rarely looked at what this meant for the leader; such as the required skills, motivation and flexibility to be able to adopt the recommended approaches to leadership. Psychological perspectives offered the perspective at an individual level such as personality factors, psychological states, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills but rarely reflected the broader context and business environment.

This research takes a transdisciplinary approach and attempts to integrate and align the capabilities to provide a more complete picture of what is required at both an intrapersonal and interpersonal level, as well as taking consideration of the broader context in which the executive is situated.

3.2 *Systems, Complexity and Organisations*

One perspective that has influenced thinking about complexity, organisations and leadership is that of the complexity sciences. Trends and thinking in management and organisational studies have long been influenced by discoveries and approaches to science more broadly. The development of systems-thinking in the early 20th century led to systems approaches being applied to management and organisations (Stacey 2007). These approaches contain often implicit assumptions that have consequences for how leaders see their role in managing organisations and therefore how effective leadership is described (Stacey 2007).

Early applications of systems-thinking, usually referred to as hard or first-order systems-thinking, offered managers a way to optimise the performance of a system and were focused on efficiency (Jackson 2003; Stacey 2007). In these approaches it is assumed that the world is made up of systems that can be objectively observed and modelled. The primary task of a leader in these approaches is to be in control of the direction of the organisation, reduce uncertainty and increase stability and predictability so that the purpose of the organisation can be achieved (Stacey 2007).

Authors writing from the perspective of complexity theory have argued that these first and second-order systems approaches are no longer adequate for the complexity of today's organisations and that approaches based on complexity theory are more applicable. (e.g. Heifetz & Linsky 2002; Stacey 2007, 2010, 2012; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey 2007; Wheatley 1999).

Complexity scientists have identified a different type of system, a Complex Adaptive System (CAS). A CAS has been defined by Boal and Schulz (2007), as:

Complex systems consist of aggregates of interacting sub-units, or agents, which together produce complex and adaptive behaviour (hence the term 'complex *adaptive* systems'. (p 413)

Simple cause-effect relationships cannot explain the emergent, dynamic and non-linear actions and properties of a CAS as it unpredictably adapts to the environment with no individual agent controlling the whole system (Plowman et al. 2007; Stacey 2007, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al. 2007). In addition, small changes in the initial conditions can have disproportionate effects on the final state as the non-linear relationships within a CAS can have the effect of amplifying the small changes into very different

outcomes (i.e. the butterfly effect) making long-term prediction in CAS impossible (Stacey 2012).

Authors applying the concepts of the complexity sciences to leadership and organisations attempt to change how leaders see their organisations and to raise awareness of the implications of this new perspective for leadership behaviours (e.g. Uhl-Bien, et al. 2007; Wheatley 1999). These authors suggest that if you view an organisation as a CAS, a different form of leadership is required. Traditional approaches to leadership argue that leaders can envision and predict the future of their organisations, but in CAS this is not possible (Plowman et al. 2007). Instead leaders need to enable rather than control, cultivating the conditions for the creative solutions to emerge from the interactions of the agents in the organisation (Marion & Uhl-bien, 2001). In CAS the leader moves from knowing the world to making sense of the world, and from forecasting outcomes to designing the future (Paparone, Anderson & McDaniel, 2008).

Stacey (2007, 2010) has argued that despite applying concepts from the new science of complexity, these authors are not presenting radical new ideas that challenge the current management discourse as these authors claim. Instead they are simply repackaging ideas that exist in the current literature in new jargon. Stacey (2010) also rejects the idea of there being any analogy between systems and humans, their interactions and organisations. In his view, if individuals are seen as parts of a system and causal links between them are modelled, the model will take no account of the human capacities to choose their own actions. For this reason the dominant management discourse based on any form of systems-thinking does not reflect what really happens in organisations. He also argues that no person can stand outside the organisation and design and predict its future outcomes, because the outcomes will depend on the response from the other person or people in the interaction. All leaders are part of the interactions that form the ongoing process of an organisation's operation and change. Therefore, Stacey (2010) argues, the term CAS cannot be applied to organisations, as he does not see organisations as systems and people don't always adapt to each other.

Stacey (2007a, 2010) proposes that the appropriate term for applying the concepts from complexity science to organisations is complex responsive processes (CRP). From a CRP perspective, Stacey (2007a) argues that instead of thinking in terms of

the interaction between people as a system, it is a temporal process, the outcome of which is simply further interaction and nothing more. What is important are the local interactions, the ongoing and everyday conversations, as it is through these means that anything happens or is achieved in organisations (Stacey 2007a, 2010, 2012).

Organisations are conversational by nature and therefore the nature of the conversation will influence the constitution of the organisation (Stacey 2010, 2012). Organisations get stuck and are unable to change when the conversation revolves around a few repetitive themes but have the potential for change when the conversation is more complex and more fluid. The aim of the leader's interaction then is to widen and deepen conversation to create the possibility of new meaning, rather than closing down conversation.

3.2.1 Complex leaders for complex environments

Both the CAS and CRP perspectives recognise that organisations and today's business conditions are complex environments and imply that different leadership capabilities, processes or behaviours are required that match the complexity of this environment.

One of the ways in which a leader can match the complexity of the environment is in developing a broad range of leadership approaches that can be used to meet the demands of different situations. Rather than relying on one approach to leading an organisation, complexity leadership theorists propose that different types of leadership are required, depending on the situation (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Seers, Orton, & Schreiber 2006; Uhl-Bien et al. 2007). Lichtenstein et al. (2006) argue that three types of leadership are required: adaptive, administrative and enabling. Administrative leadership is more aligned to the current management paradigm of planning and co-ordinating organisational activities. Adaptive leadership is an "interactive event in which knowledge, action preferences, and behaviours change, thereby provoking an organisation to become more adaptive" (Lichtenstein et al. 2006, p.4). Enabling leadership is needed to create the right environment for adaptive leadership by balancing adaptive and administrative leadership.

Similarly, Boal and Schulz (2007) argue that both strategic leadership and traditional management are required and Heifetz and Laurie (1997) argue for technical and adaptive leadership. Stacey (1996) has also previously argued that traditional forms

of management are effective for making efficient what an organisation does well but are not effective for managing in uncertain and more chaotic spaces. As already discussed (section 1.5), Stacey (2012a) has argued that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to choose what approaches to use in advance. Stacey (2012, 2012a) argues that managers find themselves deploying a wide range of decision-making techniques in every time frame or situation. Instead leaders should hold multiple possibilities in mind and take actions that maximise the ability to respond flexibly as the outcomes emerge (Stacey 2010).

Other authors have developed frameworks to assist leaders in identifying appropriate leadership styles. Similar to Stacey's (1996) certainty/agreement matrix, Snowden and Boone (2007) developed the cynefin model (pronounced ku-nev-in). The cynefin model was developed as a sense-making framework that could be used by managers to consider the dynamics of situations, decisions, perspectives, conflicts and changes and therefore gain some sense of how to make decisions (Kurtz & Snowden 2003). The model recognises two main domains – those of order and un-order. Kurtz and Snowden (2003) portray the ordered space as designed and directed. In an ordered space we can search for what is knowable. In an un-ordered space we look for what can be patterned and it is these patterns that create a sense of order.

Both the ordered and un-ordered domains are further divided, creating four primary zones (Kurtz & Snowden 2003). The simple and complicated zones are part of the ordered domain. In the simple zone cause and effect are straightforward and the environment can be characterised as stable. Complicated contexts are those in which there is more than one right answer and cause and effect can be discerned, but not by everybody. In the un-ordered domain exist complex contexts where there is unlikely to be one right answer, and cause and effect are very hard to determine. In the zone of chaos, searching for right answers is pointless and cause and effect are impossible to detect. Unlike Stacey (2012) Snowden and Boone (2007) do recommend appropriate leadership styles for each zone and argue that leaders need to be able to flex and adapt their behaviour to suit the situation. However, like Stacey (2012), it is recognised by Snowden and Boone (2007) that most situations are likely to contain elements that fall into more than one zone, making adaptability and versatility even more important for leaders.

3.2.2 *Collaborative leadership in the zone of complexity*

Solving complex problems requires a high degree of collaboration (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange 2002) and requires that leaders consider diverse perspectives, utilise multiple forms of expertise and employ a team approach to problem-solving (Heifetz & Laurie 2007; Sargut & McGrath 2011; Snowden & Boon 2007). Rather than a command-and-control approach, leaders need to act as sense-makers of emerging patterns of events and enablers of problem-solving (Plowman et al. 2007). In the un-ordered space of complexity it is possible to identify patterns but not to enforce order (Kurtz & Snowden 2003). The leader's role is to recognise and name the patterns early so that they can be exploited or responded to.

One of the desired outcomes of using a more collaborative leadership approach is to stimulate creativity and innovation in the organisation. The IBM CEO survey (2010) found that the ability to develop creative solutions was one of the key factors in the success of those companies dealing well with complex situations.

Creating the right organisational climate to support this creative problem-solving is a key theme of authors writing from a complexity theory perspective. In order to successfully innovate, leaders need to create an environment where people are encouraged to experiment at the edges of their knowledge and experience (Plsek & Greenhaugh 2001). This means helping people build experiments that are safe to fail (Snowden & Boone 2007), which can be achieved through making small investments where mistakes are made cheaply and quickly (Sargut & McGrath 2011). This also means developing a culture where failure is tolerated (Snowden & Boone 2007) and novelty, creativity and autonomy are all encouraged (Plowman et al. 2007; Plsek & Greenhaugh 2001).

When solutions emerge, it is normally through the interactions of the people involved (Harkema 2003) and therefore interactions become central to creativity. Stacey (2010) focuses on what is required in these interactions to enable creativity, learning and innovation. The leader needs to exercise their skills of conversation to evoke and provoke further exploration of ideas and be comfortable with not knowing the answers for longer than the other members of the group. This requires being able to participate skilfully and reflectively in interactions with others, being aware of how they themselves are thinking and of the potentially destructive processes in which they are entangled.

3.2.3 *Applying the concepts*

The concepts from the complexity leadership literature are all highly theoretical with minimal research that compares leaders adopting a complexity leadership approach with other leadership approaches in terms of effectiveness and organisational performance. While it is accepted that the business environment is becoming increasingly complex and therefore that a different approach to management may be needed there is little evidence that the complexity sciences can be applied in this way to organisations and leadership. There is also limited research that indicates that adopting these leadership approaches lead to increased organisational performance. Table 1 below contains a summary analysis of the literature reviewed in this section. This table indicates that the majority of the literature is theoretical discussions rather than empirical studies.

Leaders are entangled in their complex environments as illustrated in the examples summarised in section 6.1.1. They are looking for practical solutions and may find it difficult to grasp the implications of CAS or CRP approaches to leadership. Even if they do accept the ideas, there is little recognition in the complexity leadership literature of the challenge for leaders to apply new approaches that are counter to their current style. Stacey (2010) has recognised that leaders need to reflect on their own neurotic dispositions but perhaps does not recognise what is required for leaders to be able to do so. If reading about a new approach were sufficient, then there would be little need for leadership consultants and executive coaches.

Author/s	Type of publication	Comments
Boal, K.B. & Schultz, P.L. (2007)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article. Drawing on some real-life examples to illustrate points.
Harkema, S. (2003)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Heifetz, R.A. & Laurie, D. L. (1997)	Business Literature (HBR)	Theoretical discussion article.
Heifetz, R. A. & Linsky M. (2002)	Book	Theoretical discussion article. Drawing on some real-life examples to illustrate points.
IBM (2010)	Business Research	Survey by face to face interviews conducted with 1541 CEOs of organisations in 60 countries and 33 industries. Outcomes completed using performance data of organisations for both long term (4 years and short term (1 year). No indication of analysis conducted but claim analytics conducted.
Kurtz, C. F. & Snowden, D. J (2003)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Lichtenstein, B.B., Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., Seers, A., Orton, J.D., & Schreiber, C. (2006)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Lissack, M. R. (1997)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Marion, R. & Uhl-bien, M.(2001).	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Mumford, Scott, Gaddis & Strange (2002).		Literature review - limited critique of the literature surveyed. No explanation of how the literature was selected.
Palus, C.J., Horth, D.M., Selvin, A.M. & Pulley, M.L. (2003).	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion and practitioner case study on leadership development for complexity. No outcome measures, only feedback on the programme.
Paparone, C. R, Anderson, R. A. & Mc Daniel Jr., RR. (2008).	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Plowman, D.A., Solansky, S., Beck, T. E., Baker, L., Kulkarni, M., & Travis, D. V. (2007)	Peer reviewed journal	Single qualitative longitudinal case study. Not-for- profit setting, question generalisability.
Pisek, P.E. & Greenhalgh , T	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article using examples from medical field as illustrations of how the field can be viewed through CT lens.
Pulakos, E. D., Arad, S., Donovan, M.A., & Plamondon, K.E. (2000)	Peer reviewed journal	Summarises the research conducted to develop a taxonomy of adaptability and validate the 8 factor model developed. Exploratory factor analyses using data from 1,619 respondents supported the proposed 8-dimension taxonomy from Study 1. Subsequent confirmatory factor analyses on the remainder of the sample (n = 1,715) indicated a good fit for the 8-factor model.
Sargut, G & McGrath, R. G. (2011).	Business Literature (HBR)	Theoretical discussion article.
Snowden, D. J. & Boone, M.E. (2007)	Business Literature (HBR)	Theoretical discussion article.
Stacey, R. D. (1993, 1996,)	Book	Theoretical discussion article. Drawing on some real-life examples to illustrate points.
Stacey, R. D. (1996a,)	Book	Theoretical discussion.
Stacey, R. D. (2007)	Book	Theoretical discussion.
Stacey, R. D. (2007a)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Stacey, R. D. (2010)	Book	Theoretical discussion.
Stacey, R. D. (2012)	Book	Theoretical discussion.
Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R. & McKelvey, B. (2007)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion article.
Wheatley , M (1999)	Book	Theoretical discussion.

Table 1 Analysis of CT literature

3.3 Leadership and Leadership Development Theory Perspective

The leadership and leadership development literature does provide some insight into what is required for behavioural change and the research in this field supplements the view from the complexity and systems fields. There have been many summaries of leadership theory and the objective of this section is to point to key authors that have influenced my approach to developing leader capabilities. In selecting literature from the broad range of articles on leadership I selected those that had specifically considered leadership and complexity.

Day (2001) draws a distinction between the leader and leadership. In much of the literature leadership has been conceptualised as an individual skill or set of capabilities of an individual. A different perspective is one that views leadership as a social process that engages everyone within a particular community such as an

organisation. From this perspective, leadership can happen at any level of the organisation and is created through relationships or social capital. Day (2001) has argued that this relational view of leadership is complementary to that of the individual leader perspective and effective development would integrate both.

Day (2001) sees leader development focused on the intrapersonal level with development activities targeting areas such as self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation. Leadership development, the relational perspective, focuses on capabilities related to social awareness such as empathy and political awareness, as well as social skills such as team orientation, change and conflict management.

Zaccaro (2007) has proposed a model of leadership that is similar to that of Day (2001). In reviewing the major leadership theories he identified that two major perspectives on leadership theory have come and gone in waves of popularity; the trait-based perspective, and the situational or contingency view of leadership. Early trait theories saw leadership as a unique property, generally considered heritable or genetic that set some people apart from others. This belief prevailed in the leadership literature until the late 1940s and 1950s when it was rejected by researchers who argued that this theory was insufficient to explain leader effectiveness (Zaccaro 2007).

Leadership theorists in the mid to late 20th century developed a range of situational or contingency models of leadership. The main proposition of these theories is that leadership effectiveness is dependent on the environment in which the leadership behaviours are being enacted (Sahal 1979) and that a leader who may be effective in one situation may not be effective in a different context (Zaccaro 2007).

Zaccaro (2007) argues that rather than viewing leadership theory as either trait-based or situational, in fact it is a case of both perspectives being applicable and that the interactions between the individual and situation should be considered. Zaccaro (2007) proposes a multi-stage model where distal attributes such as personality, motives, values and cognitive capability act as a precursor for the development of other more proximal attributes and skills such as emotional intelligence, social appraisal and interaction skills and problem solving ability. What Zaccaro (2007) proposes is an integrated set of cognitive abilities, social capabilities and dispositional tendencies with each set of traits contributing to the influence of others.

This approach is similar to Day's (2001) approach but what Zaccaro's (2007) model adds is the concept of a multi-stage nature of leadership with the distal attributes influencing the more proximal attributes such as communication style. The role of situation is also considered in this model as Zaccaro (2007) proposes that situational influences will moderate the effects of leader attributes on leadership processes and therefore on outcomes.

Zaccaro's (2007) model is presented as a linear model with each stage influencing the other in one direction only. While Zaccaro (2007) has integrated trait-based theories with situation or contingency theories, viewed through a complexity theory or systems dynamics perspective the interactions between the elements may be over-simplified. For example, in this model the outcome does not appear to have a feedback loop to leader behaviours, knowledge or skills or state-like attributes such as motivation. While it is a useful model, it lacks some complexity in conceptualising how the elements interact in a real-world situation.

Day, Harrison and Halpin (2009) have built on Day's (2001) earlier thinking and propose a model of leadership development that is influenced by systems and complexity thinking. This model gives more consideration to how the intrapersonal and interpersonal capabilities may interact. Instead of a linear model, they argue that leadership development could be conceptualised as a web with multiple layers and complex links between elements. Components in the web can influence each other and various attributes and strands of development interact with each other, perhaps forming completely new skills or competencies.

3.3.1 Leader complexity

As with authors writing from the complexity theory perspective, a common theme in the leadership literature was that one of the ways in which a leader can match the complexity of the environment is by having a broader range of behaviours that can be used to meet the demands of different situations. Yukl and Mahsud (2010) argue that the increased pace and variety of challenges that leaders need to navigate today make adaptability and versatility more important than ever. Being effective in this complex environment means being able to flex the leadership approach in response to changing environments (Kaiser & Overfield, 2010).

Hoojiberg, Hunt and Dodge (1997) term this ability to flex leadership approach behavioural complexity and argue that it is linked to leadership effectiveness. Unlike contingency approaches, they argue that it is impossible to specify the appropriate behaviour for every situation but that having a broader repertoire increases the likelihood that they will have an appropriate response. However, it is not just having a range of behaviours which will increase leader effectiveness; it is also using them in the right situation that makes them effective (Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Yukl & Mahsud 2010,). Identifying when to use which behaviours requires cognitive and social complexity, which are considered precursors to behavioural complexity (Hoojiberg et al. 1997).

Hoojiberg et al. (1997) argue that someone with higher cognitive complexity processes information differently, can see more categories and dimensions and can integrate them to come up with a more nuanced decision or action. Those individuals with greater cognitive complexity seek more information and spend more time interpreting it. Social complexity is the ability to differentiate and integrate the relational and personal aspects of a situation, leading to increased understanding of the context and how it needs to be approached. The concept goes beyond having interpersonal skills such as empathy, motivation and communication to the appropriate application of these skills in different contexts.

Hoojiberg et al. (1997) argue that all three elements of what they call the Leaderplex model need to be in place for leadership effectiveness. Even with cognitive and social complexity a leader still needs the behavioural complexity to be able to act differently based on what they have understood and integrated through their cognitive and social complexity capability.

Kaiser and Overfield (2010) also make the point that cognitive and emotional factors are important to the development of leadership versatility. They include the ability to read the situation, tacit knowledge, the motivation to try new approaches and the belief that these new approaches will lead to the desired outcomes.

3.3.2 Enabling leadership style

In the same way that authors writing from the complexity theory perspective identified the collaborative leadership style as important as situations become more complex, leadership theorists also identify this as being important. Different terms are used,

but the descriptions of the associated behaviours are similar. For example, White and Shullman (2010) use the terms participative, empowering and learning; Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) use the term enabling leadership; and Kayes (2006) uses the term reciprocal leadership. Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) identify behaviours such as listening to others' ideas and opinions, delegating, empowering employees, and providing support to others as key elements of their enabling leadership style and Kayes (2006) recommends adopting a coaching approach, co-ordinating action and minimising power differences.

Writers from the leadership field also see the importance of dialogue and interactions in complex environments. Palus, Horth, Selvin, and Pulley (2003) emphasise the importance of conversations that pursue deeper levels of understanding that bring the assumptions, beliefs, data and reasoning behind people's stated positions into play so that they can be seen and discussed. Similarly, Kahane (2007) has developed an approach to solving tough problems through what he calls generative dialogue; an open way of talking and listening in order create new realities. Kayes (2006) also emphasises conversation as a key to building teams that can meet complex problems through developing trust, shared beliefs and vision.

3.3.3 Self-knowledge and self-management

In order to be able to be flexible and adaptive, a leader is likely to need to develop styles and behaviours that are different to those they have routinely used. To facilitate this development, an awareness of their mental filters, values and life experiences is required. (Palus et al. 2003). Mental models and a leader's perspective are important as they influence what a leader is likely to pay attention to (Lissack 1997). If a leader is self-aware and has some visibility of their mental models and frames of reference they are less likely to act from a dominant behaviour (Martin 2007) and they will have more opportunity to choose to take other perspectives.

Complex situations usually defy existing approaches and solutions and therefore the usual perspectives and mental models may not provide the required answers (Martin 2007; Palus et al. 2003). Dealing with complex situations requires the ability to take different perspectives; to see things from the viewpoint of various stakeholders, to consider different timeframes, to zoom in on detail and back out to the broader context, framing issues in different ways to reveal different dimensions (Palus et al. 2003).

With different perspectives and opinions likely, a complex environment often contains ambiguity and uncertainty. Leaders who are effective in this environment are able to act despite this uncertainty and without having all the information (IBM 2010). This involves being able to admit not knowing all the answers, embracing the uncertainty and ambiguity, and still being able to make decisions (IBM 2010; Martin 2007; White & Shullman 2010). Operating in this environment can be anxiety-producing and therefore an ability to manage anxiety levels in others and in oneself is important (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon 2000; Stacey 2010, 2012). This requires the ability to master the initial panic and wade through the complexity to find the solution (Martin 2007).

3.3.4 Research quality

Entering the term 'leadership' into the primary university search engine, Summon, returns close to five million results. Requesting literature only from scholarly and peer-reviewed sources reduces the number to 475,000 results, still a large amount of research. However, despite the quantity of research, much of the literature lacks an empirical base and the literature reviewed above is largely theoretical or is based on a limited number of studies and weak research methods. Table 2 below provides a summary of the research analysis of the literature.

One of the most extensively researched areas is that of contingency or situational leadership models. While there is a large number of studies, they generally used weak methods such as subordinate surveys to identify leadership behaviours, and superiors' ratings of leaders' effectiveness. Often the studies measured a wide range of behavioural and situational variables and often through retrospective data collection rather than data gathered over time (Yukl & Mahsud 2010).

Another source of research on which leadership versatility and agility authors base their work is that of competing values (Quinn 1988; Quinn, Spreitzer & Hart 1992). In this case there is only a small number of papers based on case analysis (Yukl & Mahsud 2010).

In terms of the specific traits and skills that may enhance flexible leadership there is still only limited evidence. In most cases the methods used are to correlate leader skills and personality measures with indicators of leadership effectiveness. Most of

the research again has weak methods such as using cross-sectional survey data with convenience samples (Yukl & Mahsud 2010).

Author/s	Type of publication	Comments
Day, D. V	Peer reviewed journal	Literature review and theoretical discussion. Limited critique of research.
Day, D. V., Harrison, M. M., Halpin, S. M. (2009)	Book	Theoretical discussion drawing on some empirical research. Limited critique of the research on which theories are based.
Hoojiberg, R. Hunt J. G. & Dodge, G. E. (1997)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical model, no outcome study to support model. Limited outcomes studies to support elements of the model.
Kahane, A. (2007)	Book	Theory based on practical experience and case studies.
Kaiser, R. B. & Overfield, D. V. (2010)	Peer reviewed journal	Empirical study, within subjects outcome study, large sample size, results consistent with earlier study and studies used to develop instrument.
Kayes, D. C. (2006)	Book	Theoretical discussion and application of theory in retrospect to a case study. Phd research.
Martin, R. L. (2007)	Book	Theoretical discussion drawing on examples from experience and interviews with leaders.
Palus, C. J., Horth, D. M. Selvin, A. M. & Pulley,	Peer reviewed journal	Case study of leadership development programme. Limited measures.
White, R. P. & Shullman, S. L (2010)	Peer reviewed journal	Empirical study, preliminary internal validation study. Small sample size.
Yukl, G. & Mahsud, R. (2010)	Peer reviewed journal	Literature review and theoretical discussion. Some critique of research.
Zaccaro, S. J.	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical model, no outcome study to support model. Limited outcomes studies to support elements of the model.

Table 2 Leadership literature analysis

Most studies of leadership behaviour look at linear relationships of the behaviour, failing to take into account that doing too little or too much of a behaviour may be ineffective (Yukl & Mahsud 2010). The exception to this is the research that Kaiser and Overfield (2010) conducted in developing the Leadership Versatility Index (LVI). In the LVI, there is a nine-point scale with the ideal score being zero; underdoing is to the left (-4) and overdoing to the right (+4). However, there are only a small number of studies completed to support the model and the survey relies on self-report and subordinate and superiors' ratings of both the behaviours and leadership effectiveness. More on the LVI and the structure of the scale can be found in section 4.5.

The other research reviewed here is largely theoretical papers that develop new and more complex models of leadership (Hoojiberg et al. 1997; Day, Harrison & Halpin 2009; Zaccaro 2007). These models are based on a small number of papers relating to specific individual components of their models. For example, the behavioural repertoire component of the Hoojiberg et al. (1997) Leaderplex model is based on two studies (Bullis 1992; Hart & Quinn 1993). These models are proposed as a

framework for a more complex view of leadership and as a basis for future research, but with little critique of the research on which they are based.

The same issues can be found with the research on other capabilities needed to navigate complexity such as the ability to deal with ambiguity (White & Shullman 2010; Martin 2007). White and Shullman (2010) have based their model on interviews with executives and one internal validation study, which they conducted. Martin's (2007) theories are based on interviews and his observations and experiences in working with leaders.

While the literature from this perspective has more practical application and recognises the complexity of not only the business environment but also the complexity of developing leaders and their leadership capability, the research is still at an early stage and there is much more research that is required before any of these models can be seen as based on robust research. Despite this, the literature provides a useful starting point to understanding the capabilities that leaders may require to navigate complexity.

3.4 Constructive-Developmental Perspective

A psychological perspective that provides another useful view is that of the adult-developmental, ego-developmental or constructive-developmental theorists. These theorists are concerned with how an individual's ability to make sense of a complex world develops in adulthood and the impact of this ability on leadership effectiveness.

The constructive-developmental theorists have argued that cognitive development continues through adulthood with mental growth following a hierarchical sequence of stages. According to this theory the order of these stages is predictable and each stage represents an increasingly complex and coherent stage of reasoning (Cook-Greuter 2008). A number of attempts have been made to map these adult stages of development and this has resulted in several theories that share the basic premise of adult development but that use differing frameworks and terminology to identify and categorise the stages. The key theories on which this project draws are those of Susanne Cook-Greuter, Bill Torbert, and Robert Kegan. These authors have extended the theory of adult development to the field of leadership, positing stages of leadership related to each stage of adult development.

Four broad tiers of development have been identified (Cook-Greuter 2008): pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional, and ego-transcendent. Within these broad tiers, Cook-Greuter has identified nine stages or action-logics (Rooke & Torbert 2005). Rooke and Torbert (2005) and Cook-Greuter (2008) have related these action-logics to leadership, identifying the leadership style and capabilities for individuals at each level and an instrument for measuring the action-logic, the SCTi-MAP, has been developed. The SCTi-MAP is based on the Washington Sentence Completion Test and measures action-logic through the analysis of the language used to complete the sentences (Cook-Greuter 2006). As individuals develop through the action-logics they are able to see more and describe what they are aware of in ever more subtle ways (Sharma & Cook-Greuter 2011). Awareness of self, others, systems, social structures and cultural conditioning grows along with an ability to see the influences of these factors and the assumptions that underpin them. In gaining distance and perspective on these elements of understanding they can be investigated and challenged (Garvey Berger 2012).

3.4.1 *Relationship to leading in complex environments*

The developmental perspective provides another view of the capabilities required for navigating complexity. This perspective is not about competencies or skills but about the developmental stage of the leader, their complexity of mind. In order to be effective there needs to be a match between the complexity of mind and the demands of the executive's role (Berger & Fitzgerald 2002).

Rooke and Torbert (2005) have found that in measuring the action-logic of thousands of executives that both individual and organisational performance varied according to developmental stage. Their research indicates that only 15% of the executives tested measured at the level of *individualist*, *strategist* or above. Further, they argue that it is at this level that executives need to operate in order to effectively lead innovation and transformational change within their organisations in today's complex business environment.

The *individualist* stage is the first of the post-conventional stages and brings a greater systems awareness, looking beyond immediate cause and effect to thinking about the system as a whole. *Individualist* leaders may experiment with different kinds of relating, using power differently in different contexts. They can be flexible and creative thinkers as they see many different perspectives, which are all relative. They are

interested in their own development and consider their development a goal itself rather than as a means to an end (Cook-Greuter 2006).

Leaders at the *strategist* stage are comfortable in flexing their leadership style to the needs of the diverse situations and people. They recognise that there are likely to be different perspectives and will strive to create a shared vision that will engage all members. They are flexible about the methods people take to achieve their goals and can be creative in dealing with conflict as they see it as part of all relationships. They can facilitate conversations to uncover different perspectives and value these differences. They are concerned with developing their potential and that of others (Cook-Greuter 2006). Self-knowledge is also a key factor for later stage leaders as they become aware that what one sees depends on one's worldview and they are more inclined to question their own assumptions (Rooke 2001).

As can be seen in the descriptions above, a number of the capabilities identified by the complexity and leadership theorists are identified as being traits of individuals at later stages of development.

The research base of the constructive adult developmental field is also an emerging field. However, the research on the SCTi-MAP is based on large sample sizes: 4510 USA mixed population; 497 USA managers and supervisors; and 1568 USA consultants and leaders taking part in development activities (Cook-Greuter 2006). The research was conducted over a decade using interview, field studies and laboratory experiments and has consistently identified statistically significant behavioural differences between managers scored at different action-logics (Cook-Greuter 1999; Fisher & Torbert 1991,1995; Merron, Fisher & Torbert 1987; Torbert, 1989, 1994).

The research linking action-logic to leadership effectiveness is less robust with only a small number of papers and no consistent empirical measure of organisational success. One significant study by Rooke and Torbert (1998) involved the longitudinal study of ten organisations tracking the leadership team's ability to lead transformational change. The study took place over four and a half years and demonstrated that those organisations that were able to transform were led by CEOs with a *strategist* action-logic. The organisational transformation was measured through longitudinal data and interviews with key stakeholders.

More research is needed to validate the findings from this initial base of research, particularly in relation to the impact on organisation's success in the action-logics of the leadership team members.

3.5 *Conclusion*

In reviewing the literature from different perspectives it became clear that no single perspective provided the full picture of the capabilities required to effectively navigate complexity. Considering only the literature from the complexity theorists I found that the development of the leader themselves was rarely considered. An assumption appeared to be made that understanding the complexity theory metaphor for organisations would be enough for a leader to shift their behaviour. While this may be the case for some individuals, behavioural change is usually a complex process with many factors to consider. The addition of the leadership theory and psychological perspectives introduced the concept of leadership effectiveness and leader development as a multi-stranded web of interacting factors across multiple realms; intrapersonal, interpersonal and social.

Key themes emerged from these multiple perspectives along with a richer picture of what might be required for leaders to effectively navigate complexity. This provides many avenues for a coach to explore in working with executives. However, this presents the challenge of integrating the themes from multiple perspectives into a coherent view.

This challenge has been addressed through viewing the findings through the critical realist lens and organising the capabilities and themes along the lines of the domains and realms of a CR perspective. This assisted me in developing a framework of capabilities that reflects the different elements involved, and encourages the consideration of the interactions between these elements and the context in which the executive is working.

This framework, an outcome of this literature review, provides a way to explore and organise the capabilities required to navigate complexity. It also provides a framework in which to integrate multiple perspectives and therefore provides a more holistic approach than is offered by only one perspective. This approach is consistent with today's complex business environment as well as the complexity involved in

developing leaders. I have named this framework the Navigator framework and a full description is found in section 6.1.3.

3.6 *Coaching Literature*

This section provides an overview of the relevant coaching literature as well as literature from other fields that influenced the development of the coaching framework and approach. The review starts with a summary of literature related to executive coaching and any research related to coaching as an intervention for developing the ability to deal with complexity, and coaching in complex cases. This is followed by an overview of literature related to different perspectives of coaching and associated coaching models and frameworks. Finally, literature relating to both the CF approach and reflective practice and its application to coaching is reviewed.

3.6.1 *Executive coaching*

Currently there is no single accepted definition of executive coaching (Stern 2004) although there have been a number of attempts at agreeing a definition or at least the common themes among definitions. Starting with a description of coaching in general, Grant et al. (2010) have identified that most definitions have as their foundation the view that coaching is a collaborative relationship through which a coachee attains personal or professional outcomes that are meaningful to them.

More specific definitions reflect the perspective of the author or coach. As these authors come from many different backgrounds and perspectives, it is not surprising that a single definition has yet to be agreed. For example, Grant (2006) defines executive coaching from a goal-focused, solution-focused perspective as:

...a goal-oriented, solution-focused process in which the coach works with the coachee to help identify and construct possible solutions, delineate a range of goals and options, and then facilitate the development and enactment of action plans to achieve those goals. (p.156).

Writing from a psychological perspective Peltier (2001) defines executive coaching as:

Someone from outside an organisation uses psychological skills to help a person develop into a more effective leader. These skills are applied to specific present-moment work problems in a way that enables this person to incorporate them into his or her permanent management or leadership repertoire. (p. xx (20) of introduction).

In an attempt to arrive at an agreed definition of executive coaching, Ennis, Otto, Goodman and Stern (2012) propose the following definition:

Executive coaching is an experiential, individualised, leadership development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short and long-term organisational goals. It is conducted through one on one interaction, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. The organisation, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum learning and impact. (p.20).

This definition focuses on learning and leadership development and makes the link between improving the leader's capability and the achievement of organisational objectives, which is not explicit in the other definitions. In the same way, the frequently quoted Kilberg (1996) definition also draws the link between coaching a leader and their impact on the organisation's outcomes and specifies behavioural techniques:

A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a wide range of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of a client's organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement. (p.138).

To further complicate the matter, a number of different types of coaching have been identified, all of which could be part of an executive coaching programme. Grant et al. (2010) identify three specific types of coaching: skills, performance and development coaching. Skills coaching is focused on developing a specific identified skill or set of skills whereas performance coaching focuses on improving performance in a specific domain within a specified time period. Development coaching is considered to be broader and more strategic and is focused on increasing the individual's ability to meet future challenges through increased self-awareness, understanding and awareness of others and the systems of which they are part.

Developmental (Cox & Jackson 2010) and transformational coaching (Hawkins & Smith 2010) are two other types of coaching. Developmental coaching as described by Cox and Jackson (2010) is seen as being broader than a current issue. Their definition emphasises that the coaching should lead to a progressive and permanent change; that is a change that leads to a sustainable development of a capability, which in turn leads to an enrichment of not only the coachee, but also changes the capacity of the system in which the coachee sits. Developmental coaches could work from a number of perspectives including cognitive-behavioural, constructive developmental, systems theories or adult learning, which again can lead to confusion over what is being offered.

Transformational coaching as defined by Hawkins and Smith (2010) is focused on achieving a fundamental shift in capacity through transforming the coachee's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving in relation to others. The change in perspective comes through a change in the coachee's assumptions, values and beliefs about the presenting issue. Practitioners of developmental coaching would also argue that this is what they achieve. What differentiates transformational coaching as defined by Hawkins and Smith (2010) is that they focus on achieving this shift live in the coaching sessions. They argue that in their approach they believe they are shifting action-logics (Rooke & Torbert 2005), whereas developmental coaching just develops someone at their current level. Many developmental coaches would disagree with this distinction, as would the constructive-developmental theorists who believe that moving from stage to stage is a gradual process requiring reflection, coaching and a time span of at least two years.

3.6.2 Executive coaching definition

Given that there is such a broad range of definitions and perspectives, practitioners should be encouraged to articulate their view of executive coaching. This may mean using an established definition or developing one that represents their approach to coaching and the perspectives on which they draw. This will enable coachees and organisations to understand the scope of the services being offered and assist these buyers in making an informed decision as to the suitability of the coaching to meet their needs.

In the following section I outline my perspectives and offer a definition that reflects my understanding and use of the term executive coaching.

Coaching can be applied in many situations and with a wide range of recipients. I focus my practice on an organisational setting, working with executives and those employees identified as high-potential candidates. Therefore, I view myself as an executive coach rather than a life coach or personal coach.

The primary purpose of the coaching assignments for which I am engaged is to assist my coachees to be more effective within the organisation and to develop their leadership capability and capacity for current or future roles. This includes assisting them in developing greater awareness of their strengths and development needs in relation to their role and developing new skills and techniques that will increase their

effectiveness. This range of skills includes improving communication and influencing skills, increasing tolerance of ambiguity, assisting in managing stress, improving people leadership skills, or developing a more strategic mind-set. Specific situations are also discussed and the coachee is assisted in developing solutions to address these challenges. These situations are useful sources of learning, and provide an opportunity for reflection on the current perspectives, assumptions and beliefs that may be contributing to the situation.

In effect, I am engaged by the organisation rather than the individual to deliver the services. There will often be multiple stakeholders involved in the coaching programme including the HR sponsor of the assignment, the coachee's manager, peers and direct reports. Their involvement will vary from providing brief input at the start of the process to being directly involved in providing ongoing feedback and support to the coachee. These stakeholders can be a useful source for different perspectives on the strengths and development needs of the coachee.

As with most forms of coaching, the foundation of the process is a relationship of mutual trust. Establishing this relationship in the context of executive coaching can be complex as there are multiple relationships involved. The coaching may address issues such as health, overall wellbeing and relationships outside the organisation. Coaching conversations include information that the coachee may not have shared within the organisation. There is an apparent contradiction in this situation where there is a need for a relationship of mutual trust between the coach, coachee and organisational stakeholders but not all information is shared with all parties. In order to try and address this contradiction, I set clear boundaries with all parties regarding what information will be shared with the different stakeholders. I establish an understanding with the coachee that I only share information that they are comfortable in providing to the organisation. I gain agreement from the organisation that I will provide information on the process and progress of the coaching but not specifics of the coaching conversations. In most cases, the organisational sponsors understand that the coaching relationship requires a level of confidentiality and trust in order to be effective. This requires that organisational stakeholders extend trust to the coach and coachee that the coaching will align with organisational interests, even without full knowledge of the coaching conversations.

I bring a systems perspective to the coachee and the coaching assignment. I consider the coachee not only within the context of the organisational system but also the other systems in which they are embedded such as cultural, social, family or professional. I also consider their life experiences and future ambitions to enable me to develop a picture of how these influences create or support the current situation and identify those that can be leveraged to facilitate change. This approach also contains a similar contradiction as described above and is addressed in the same way. Both cases are also examples of some of the challenges and ethical issues raised in executive coaching. Further examples and approaches to addressing them are explored in more depth in section 5 of this document.

My coaching is predominantly developmental in that I aim to effect long-term, sustainable changes in thinking and behaviour that will have an impact not only on the individual being coached but also changes the capacity of the systems in which the person is embedded.

Below is my definition of executive coaching, which is adapted from that of Ennis et al. (2012):

Executive coaching is an experiential, individualised developmental process that builds a leader's capability to lead their teams and organisations to achieve short and long-term goals. It is conducted through one-on-one interaction, supported by data from multiple perspectives. It is based on a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the coach, coachee and organisational stakeholders working in partnership to achieve the purpose of the coaching.

3.6.3 Executive coaching and leadership development

Coaching in organisations has become a mainstream activity for leaders; however, the evidence base for coaching is still in its infancy (Grant et al. 2010). There has been little outcome research that examines the efficacy of coaching as a means to achieving organisational or individual change (Grant et al. 2010) and even less that addresses the subject of increasing an executive's ability to navigate complexity.

There has been a significant recent increase in the literature with 532 papers being published since 2000, compared to only 93 papers published between 1937 and 1999 (Grant 2011). However, much of the published literature has been opinion papers,

descriptive articles or theoretical discussions (Grant et al. 2010) and by early 2011 a total of 234 outcome studies had been published (Grant 2011).

There have been limited empirical outcome studies of the efficacy of executive coaching as a leadership development intervention and none that specifically focuses on developing the ability to navigate complexity. Within the research that has been conducted on executive coaching, the outcomes that were measured vary widely and include improved interpersonal skills, reduced stress, ability to deal with conflict, time prioritisation, and delegation, as well as measures of leadership style.

In terms of developing leadership capability there are some studies that indicate that executive coaching is an effective intervention. The results from two studies (Smither, London, Flautt, Vergas & Kucine 2003; Thach 2002) combining 360° multi-rater feedback and executive coaching suggest that this combination of feedback and coaching can lead to increased leadership effectiveness. An action research study conducted by Thach (2002) consisted of 281 executives who completed a full 360° survey prior to receiving three or four coaching sessions. A mini 360° survey focused on the key areas on which the executive was working was conducted at the end of the coaching. Results demonstrated an increase in leadership effectiveness in the measured areas of up to 60%. One of the limitations of this study included the difficulty of separating the impact of the feedback process from the effects of the coaching as there was no feedback-only or coaching-only groups.

The study by Smither et al. (2003) used a quasi-experimental design with 1,361 senior managers receiving multi-rater 360° feedback and 404 of them working with an executive coach. Those managers who worked with a coach were more likely to set development goals, and solicit improvement ideas from their supervising manager. In the analyses of the multi-rater 360° feedback scores, working with a coach was positively related to improved direct report and supervisor ratings scores.

The first randomised control study conducted in executive coaching was the study by Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009). In this study, 41 executives were randomly assigned to a coaching group and a wait-list control group. All executives received 360° degree feedback, a half-day leadership workshop and four sessions of executive coaching. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were taken. The quantitative data included measures of goal attainment, resilience, and a measure of mental

wellbeing. Qualitative data was collected through two survey questions regarding the benefits and positive flow on effects of the programme. The results indicated that the programme increased goal attainment, resilience and workplace wellbeing. In addition, the qualitative data indicated increases in confidence, applied management skills, ability to handle organisational change and that many participants gained personal or professional insights.

A further randomised control study was conducted by Cerni, Curtis and Colmar (2010). In this study, 14 school principals were randomly assigned to a control or intervention group with eight principals participating in a coaching programme based on cognitive-experiential-self theory. One of the measures used was the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio 1993) and the results showed a significant increase in transformational leadership behaviours. Two specific aspects of transformational leadership increased: idealised influence and individualised consideration. The increase in idealised influence indicated that the school staff had increased their level of trust in the school principal, were more likely to assume their leader's values and emulate their behaviour as well as increasing their commitment to achieving the leader's vision. The increase in individualised consideration indicates that the principal treated each associate with respect, rather than seeing them only as part of the system.

Another recently published study by O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013) also uses the MLQ as a measure of effectiveness of coaching. This study attempts to identify the wider benefits to the organisation of leadership coaching using social network analysis. In this study, 225 participants who formed a closed network took part in the study. Twenty executives from within the network participated in a coaching programme of eight sessions over 16 to 20 weeks. The psychological wellbeing of all participants was measured and the coaching participants also completed a goal attainment scale and the MLQ. Social network analysis was used to measure the quality and quantity of interactions between the participants. The results showed a significant increase in psychological wellbeing, goal attainment and transformational leadership behaviours in those who were coached. The participants in the coaching programme also perceived that the quality of their communication with others was improved. However, despite others rating the leaders as having increased their transformational leadership behaviours, their perception of the quality of interactions with leaders was rated less positively than at the start of the programme. This finding

highlights the challenges of measuring the effects of coaching in the real world where not all factors and variables are either measured or controlled. In this case O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013) provide several possible explanations for this result. It could be indicative of the lag effect of attempting new communication styles or approaches as the leader practises and becomes more proficient in the new behaviour. Alternatively, as the leader tries out new ways of communicating, others may find these changes challenging and possibly anxiety-provoking. In terms of the wider benefits of the coaching intervention, the study found that the more positively a leader rated their communication and closeness with their people, the more their people were likely to experience improvements in their psychological wellbeing. This is the first study to attempt to measure the broader benefits of coaching and more research in this area is required. However, this study indicates that there is a potential ripple effect of coaching.

These studies all point to executive coaching being effective in increasing leadership capability, but none provide any explicit link to navigating complexity. However, it could be argued that the transformational leadership style has many of the characteristics of the enabling and empowering leadership style that has been identified as an effective style for complex situations.

The quality of research in the executive coaching field is improving. However, there are some potential limitations to the research summarised above. Of the studies reviewed, only three were randomised control studies (Cerni et al. 2010; Grant et al. 2009; O'Connor & Cavanagh 2013), and two of those (Cerni et al. 2010; Grant et al. 2009) had relatively small sample sizes.

None of the three studies attempt to measure the effects on organisational performance and as many of the definitions, including mine, refer to the link between coaching and increased organisational performance, this is an area in which more research is needed. While these studies indicate the potential of executive coaching, we are still some way from a definitive claim that executive coaching leads to increased organisational performance.

3.6.4 Coaching models and frameworks

One of the outcomes of this project is the development of a coaching framework and this section starts by discussing the purpose of coaching models and frameworks and

the different forms these can take. Then follows an overview of the literature that informed the coaching framework that was developed in this research.

There are many coaching frameworks and models published in the peer-reviewed literature, practice-based literature and by commercial organisations trying to differentiate in a crowded coaching market (Kemp 2008). These coaching frameworks take several forms and serve a number of purposes.

Some are structures for coaching sessions, the most well-known of which being the GROW model popularised by Whitmore (1992). Others are frameworks that are tied to specific theoretical perspectives such as the OKSAR model developed from a solutions-focused approach (Jackson & McKergow 2007).

Others are frameworks for specific interventions, such as the Adversity, Belief, Consequences, Disputation, Energisation (ABCDE) model (Seligman 1990) that is based on cognitive-behavioural therapy and that aims to develop more effective thinking patterns. With the exception of the ABCDE model (Seligman 1990,) these models and frameworks are commonly used but have little research base to support their efficacy.

Representations of the whole coaching process or a theoretical approach to coaching are another form of coaching framework. These generally provide a high level outline of a coaching process with tasks or activities at each phase and some provide competencies for each step (Koortzen & Oosthuizen 2010). Again, many of these have been developed by practitioners or academics with minimal research to support their use and efficacy.

The challenge for any model or framework of coaching is whether it can ever reflect the context or dynamic interpersonal nature of coaching relationships and how they might operate in practice. In addition, some coaching approaches could be systematic to the point of mechanical and may not stack up to the messy, complex reality of coaching practice (Cushion, Armour & Jones 2007).

In the case of this project, the term coaching framework refers to a representation of the whole coaching process. It is not a step-by-step process for coaching sessions, but a guiding structure for effective application of a CF approach.

3.6.5 *Coaching frameworks and complexity*

There is a growing awareness that many existing coaching models or frameworks do not match the complexity of the current executive coaching world (Cavanagh & Lane 2012; Lane & Down 2010). Cavanagh and Lane (2012) have suggested that what is needed in more complex coaching cases are emergent approaches to coaching. These emergent modes of coaching should not seek to resolve ambiguity or complexity but should instead encourage creativity. Some approaches from the psychological sciences are moving in this direction, for example solution-focused, mindfulness and strengths-based coaching (see Cavanagh & Grant, 2010; Spence, Cavanagh & Grant 2008). Cavanagh and Lane (2012) point to other disciplines and techniques from which coaching psychology can also learn, such as Stacey's approaches to management (Stacey 2010, 2011), techniques such as World Café (Brown & Isaacs 2005) or the use of dialogue to solve tough problems (Kahane 2007). This implies that to work effectively in more complex environments requires coaches to look to a trans-disciplinary approach and embrace the artisan nature of what Drake (2010) refers to as the post-professional world.

One example is that of Cavanagh (2006) who has taken a CAS perspective to coaching and argues that complexity theory can guide our approach to the coaching conversation. From this perspective, coaching seeks to help the person maintain themselves on the edge of chaos through changing mindsets, increasing information flow and energy. Cavanagh (2006) has developed a model that serves as a metaphor for a coaching approach based on this perspective; the three reflective spaces model. The first reflective space is the internal dialogue of the coachee, the second is the reflective space between the coach and the coachee in which the coaching conversation takes place, and the third is the reflective space within the coach. It is the iterative flow of information, feedback and action between these three spaces throughout a coaching engagement that can create the potential for new knowledge to emerge and for the coachee to take action in their world. Taking this view, the interaction between the coach and coachee becomes critical and any framework for coaching that builds on Cavanagh's approach should aim to increase the coach's effectiveness in these interactions. Cavanagh (2006) based this model on his extensive coaching experience and understanding of systems theories, but as yet it is unsupported by any formal research.

Chapman (2006, 2010) has developed the Integrated Experiential Executive Coaching Model as his approach to supporting executives in managing complexity. Chapman (2006, 2010) grounds his definition of complexity and the required leadership competencies in the stratified systems theory of Elliot Jaques (Jaques & Cason 1994; Jaques & Clement 1997). According to Jaques (Jaques & Clement 1997) a key factor in an executive's ability to be effective in complex environments or complex roles is cognitive power or cognitive complexity. Cognitive complexity is the maximum multiple interconnected variables and the related rates of change and ambiguity that the executive is able to process. This should be accompanied by the desire and motivation to pursue complex roles and tasks, the requisite skills and knowledge and the ability to make sound judgements about the world and people interactions. There also needs to be an absence of interpersonal or psychological traits that will inhibit the individual's ability to interact effectively with others. Finally the organisational context in terms of structure and management processes needs to support the executive's ability to operate at the level of complexity required for their role (Jaques & Clement 1997).

Chapman (2006, 2010) then argues that executive coaching interventions should target the development of the motivation, cognitive complexity, knowledge, skills and wisdom while considering the organisational system in which the individual is situated. In order to do this, Chapman (2006, 2010) applies the Integrated Experiential Executive Coaching model to facilitate individual growth and increased individual and organisational performance. Chapman's (2006, 2010) model synthesises Wilber's Integral Model (1998, 2001) and Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model to provide a meta-theory of holistic, integrated growth and development. The application of the model is facilitated through the use of the concept of learning conversations (Harri-Augustein & Thomas 1991).

Chapman's model (2006, 2010) supports the coach in thinking holistically about the coachee and their environment and is supported by his own initial research of applying the model with 15 coachees in one organisation. Data was collected through reflective essays at the conclusion of the coaching from the 13 coachees who participated in the research. The outcomes identified in the data included indications of an increased ability in managing complexity such as developing more strategic levels of thinking, thinking more broadly about the business as a whole and distinguishing day-to-day activities from more strategic issues. The participants

indicated that they had become more reflective and were stepping back to consider their actions in relation to the organisation's strategic objectives. They also described being more self-aware as well as more aware of the dynamics of the system, their interactions with others, and how these influenced them.

Chapman's (2006, 2010) work is a useful start in understanding the experience of the coachees and some of the potential outcomes, but much more research is required to understand the impact on ability to manage complexity with a broader range of executives and with additional measures. Only the coachee's perspective was sought in this initial study and there is no data collected from other stakeholders or on organisational performance.

A second recent model that aims to facilitate working in the complex world of executive or business coaching is that of Kahn (2014): the coaching on the axis framework. Kahn (2014) argues that the role of coaching in the business environment is to act as a narrative bridge between the organisational context and the individual with the aim of improving the relationship between the two. The term axis is used to focus the process on the relationship rather than a remedial individual orientation that may be the case for many psychological approaches to coaching. In Kahn's (2014) framework the initial focus is on understanding the broader cultural context and organisational objectives, including the broader social norms and factors. This is followed by exploring the individual context and then using the coaching process to ensure alignment between the insights and related actions and the organisation's culture and goals. This means that the focus is on the interaction of the factors in what Kahn (2014) sees as the two clients, the organisation and the individual executive, rather than one perspective only.

Kahn's (2014) model is based on his extensive experience in working with executives and contains case examples and a case study. However, at this stage there is no research to support the effectiveness or efficacy of the model in supporting a coach in being more effective in complex environments or of increasing the executive's effectiveness within their environment.

These models have in common the consideration of multiple perspectives or are integrating approaches to form a more holistic approach. Chapman (2006, 2010) and Kahn (2014) provide a framework for the coach to conceptualise the case and identify

possible opportunities for change. In some respects both approaches are an attempt to formulate an account of the coachee and their situation. Chapman (2006, 2010) refers to his model as a way of making sense of the complexities of the coaching cases and Kahn (2014) specifically refers to case formulation and provides an example using the elements from both environmental and individual elements to formulate the challenge for his coachee.

Both Chapman (2006, 2010) and Kahn (2014) provide a framework but recommend flexibility in how the coaching might actually progress. Kahn (2014) specifies that a coach can use any techniques or models they are familiar with in the coaching process, although without offering any process for deciding which might be appropriate.

3.7 Case Formulation

In developing a framework for coaching, I identified that for each person I was coaching, the context, how they experienced complexity in their roles and their development needs would all be different. Any framework that I developed would need to cater for each individual and the context in which they were operating, as well as be consistent with my perspectives and experience.

One approach to coaching that potentially handles the complexities and diversity of coachees is that of CF. The concept of CF is drawn from psychological therapy and according to Crellin (1998), the term began to appear in clinical psychology texts during the 1950s as psychology was beginning to establish itself as a profession separate to psychiatry. Since that time, the ability to formulate a client's problems or issues within a chosen therapeutic perspective has become a critical capability for skilled psychological practice and is identified as a core competency for counselling psychologists by the British Psychological Society (Corrie & Lane 2010; Crellin 1998; Lane & Corrie 2009; Simms 2011).

Definitions of case formulation vary, often depending on the theoretical perspective of the author. A broad clinical definition provided by Godoy and Haynes (2011) defines CF as:

... an individualized integration of multiple judgments about a patient's problems and goals, the causal variables that most strongly influence them, and additional variables that can affect the focus, strategies, and results of treatment with a patient (p.1).

From a cognitive behavioural perspective, Mumma (2011) writes that CF can be defined as:

An idiographic theory of the person and his or her life situation (the person-situation), which includes problems as well as triggering and maintaining variables, including cognitions (thoughts and beliefs), that have relevance for treatment planning for a particular individual (p.29).

Writing from a systems perspective, Schiepek (2003) argues that case formulation should be a representation of dynamic patterns, assisting in understanding the behaviour of a specific system, whether that is a client or social group.

Lane and Corrie (2009) argue that in general terms a formulation is:

...an explanatory account of the issues with which a client is presenting (including predisposing, precipitating and maintaining factors) that can form the basis of a shared framework of understanding and which has implications for change (p196).

Despite the different ways in which CF is defined, there is broad agreement about the functions that it can serve (Corrie & Lane 2010). Some of the functions identified by Corrie and Lane (2010) in their review of the CF literature include: clarifying hypotheses and formulating appropriate questions; prioritising client issues; aiding selection of appropriate intervention strategies; predicting client reactions to interventions and possible obstacles to progress; facilitating systematic thinking about lack of progress; identifying missing information; and identifying patterns in a client's actions and responses.

3.7.1 *Is case formulation effective?*

In psychological therapy the CF is used to design an individual treatment plan tailored to the specific and unique needs of the client (Mumma 2011). The alternative is to follow manualised or empirically supported treatments that are designed to address specific problems (Persons 2008).

While CF is considered to be at the heart of evidence-based practice (Beiling & Kuyken 2003), the empirical evidence to support the efficacy of a CF approach over manualised treatment is somewhat sparse and equivocal (Corrie & Lane 2010; Persons 2008). Few randomised control trials have been conducted comparing the outcomes of the two approaches for the treatment of psychological disorders. The

results of the few studies that have been conducted have not been definitive. For example, in the CBT field Schulte, Kunzel, Pepping and Shulte-Bahrenberg (1992) found that formulation driven treatments achieved similar or slightly less successful outcomes than standardised treatments for phobias. On the other hand, Persons (2008) reviewing this research argues that the differences in outcomes disappeared as time progressed, with no significant difference in outcome after two years.

Mumma (2011) also argues that the validity or accuracy of the CFs was not evaluated, making the formulation an uncontrolled random variable in the study. In addition, the CFs may have included idiosyncratic and unique aspects of the individual cases that were targets for intervention. However, because standardised measures of the target constructs were used, these measures may not have been sensitive to changes in these areas. Finally, Mumma (2011) argues that these cases were single issue cases but the real benefit of a CF approach in CBT is in the treatment of more complex cases for which there are no standardised treatments. Human behaviour can have multiple causes and multiple pathways by which the same symptoms can appear in different individuals and CF can assist the practitioner in developing a comprehensive picture of a client's problems and causal factors (Nezu, Nezu & Lombardo 2004).

Bieling and Kuyken (2003) have attempted to evaluate whether cognitive CFs are reliable. They concluded that in terms of reliability there was good agreement for the descriptive elements of the formulation (problems with which the client is presenting), but much less agreement for the inferential aspects (underlying cognitive mechanisms). However, they also concluded that reliability could be improved through training and the use of more systematic approaches to CF.

3.7.2 Applying case formulation to executive coaching

These definitions and the current research relate CF to psychological therapy and mental health applications and as yet, there is very little literature applying the concept to the field of coaching (Lane & Corrie 2009).

Developing a definition for CF that is applicable to the coaching field may assist in increased use and research in this area. A definition would encourage more coaches to consider the applicability of CF to their practice and would support researchers in identifying avenues to explore in terms of approaches to CF in coaching, effectiveness of CF, and outcomes of using CF. While many of the elements of the

current CF definitions would also apply to coaching contexts, there are some elements that will need emphasis or modification in a coaching CF definition. While the positive psychology movement (see Linley & Joseph 2004) and newer approaches to therapy such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (see Harris 2006 for an introduction) are shifting the focus of some clinical psychologists to what makes people well, optimal functioning and flourishing, some clinical approaches remain problem-focused. This problem-focused perspective is reflected in some of the definitions above.

The application of CF to executive coaching requires the definition to reflect that in many cases coaching is often solution and future-focused. The following definition is proposed:

Coaching case formulation (CF) is an individualised explanatory account of the dynamic interacting factors that predispose, precipitate or maintain specific behaviours or situations, and those that may enable, support and catalyse change. The CF acts as a shared framework for understanding the current situation and identifying multiple pathways to sustainable positive change.

Despite the equivocal findings in CF research, it is still recognised as being a defining skill in applied psychology (Lane & Corrie 2009). Lane and Corrie (2009) have made a similar argument for coaching CF. Some forms of coaching may not require a CF approach because current simple models may be sufficient, for example skills coaching or what Lane and Corrie (2009) term horizontal change. However, if what is required is a vertical change, a change in perspective or the way a coachee views themselves, others and the inter-relationships between the factors in their situation, a CF may provide a useful way of making these factors and their current perspectives explicit.

As with other fields of applied psychology, evidence-based coaching practice seeks to develop a set of models and theories that can guide interventions and predict likely outcomes. These models are evidence-based in that the recommended interventions have been subjected to empirical testing to validate their efficacy. These models share the common assumption that cause and effect are linear and are relatively stable, and that we can know and predict outcomes (Cavanagh & Lane 2012).

However, in dealing with situations where cause and effect are less obvious, Cavanagh and Lane's (2012) emergent approach may be required; an approach that would enable the coach to develop multiple new and unique solutions to match the unique situations of the coachees.

The CF approach may provide the structure for coaches to work with the complexity of cases without needing to oversimplify in order to apply empirically tested approaches. These evidence-based approaches may form part of the solution but a CF approach allows for creativity in finding new solutions while still being based in a scientific-practitioner model. As argued by Drake (2010), this facilitates the craftsperson's approach to professional practice, an approach that "...blends science and art in the pursuit of conscious mastery" (p. 243).

3.7.3 Challenges of applying case formulation to executive coaching

There are a number of challenges to applying CF to executive coaching. Firstly, many executives are highly action-orientated and are looking for quick fixes to their situation. Developing the CF can take time and reflection and may need to be done in conjunction with identifying some quick wins with the coachee.

CF is not well understood outside the fields of psychological therapies and mental health care and the term itself has a medical or clinical tone. If CF is to be used in the executive coaching field, a modification of the terminology is required. For use in the coaching field, I propose that the term 'account' be adopted as it sounds less clinical and offers some indication of its content and purpose.

Developing a CF that is valuable can be a complex task and will require capabilities and competencies that are not currently part of many coach education programmes. A focus on training specific methodologies, techniques and models is the current widespread approach to training coaches, particularly in the commercial coaching schools and so there will be the need for a simple, but not simplistic, guide to help coaches begin to apply CF.

As with CF in other branches of psychology, there will be a challenge in assessing if the account is correct and whether it has functional value (Tarrier 2006). It is hard to assess if an account is right given that there are so many factors involved in each individual case. The purpose is to identify avenues for generating positive change

based on the best approaches and generating hypotheses to be tested. If these hypotheses and the account make sense to the coachee, they have some validity (Persons 1989). Whether these hypotheses are functional or not will be tested by the outcomes of the coaching.

3.7.4 Approaches to case formulation

Lane and Corrie (2009) have proposed that if formulation is to be considered 'fit for purpose' for coaching psychologists it is necessary to develop a model or framework that: facilitates the incorporation of a variety of stakeholder views; takes into account other factors beyond individual and internal factors; and should be relevant to all contexts regardless of the goals, context and theoretical approach to coaching used.

In developing the approach to coaching CF, a number of frameworks and approaches have informed the final PAIR framework. The following section outlines these approaches as background to the development of the PAIR framework. These were selected as they met the qualities outlined above and provided a structure for not only developing the PAIR framework but also for constructing and applying CF to the research case studies.

3.7.5 Purpose, Perspectives, Process framework

The first model that was explored was the purpose, perspective and process (PPP) framework that provides a systematic but flexible approach to formulation (Corrie & Lane 2010, Lane & Corrie 2009).

Purpose

The first step in creating a formulation is to define the purpose of coaching, as well as the purpose of the formulation itself. There are four key elements to defining the purpose for the work: understanding the issues or the question you are exploring; developing a clear understanding of the key stakeholders' expectations; ensuring clarity on the role each stakeholder will play in the coaching engagement; and considering the wider context in which the coaching will take place. One key question for coaches to consider in evaluating the purpose is whether coaching and specifically the coaching services and approaches an individual coach may offer can fulfil this purpose and what are the boundaries or issues that may arise that may indicate the need for referral to another professional (Corrie & Lane 2010, Lane & Corrie 2009).

Perspective

Following the definition of the purpose, the next consideration is the perspectives that the coach and coachee bring to the engagement. For the coach, this will include the theoretical perspectives underpinning their coaching practice, their professional knowledge and their beliefs about that knowledge and how it should be applied. The coachee will also have their own perspectives and the formulation approach should also provide for the consideration and integration of their beliefs, knowledge and capabilities (Corrie & Lane 2010; Lane & Corrie 2009).

Corrie and Lane (2010) have identified five perspectives that typically inform formulation in the psychological professions. The first is a formulation derived from a particular diagnosis. In psychological therapy and mental health professions this diagnosis may be derived from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association. In executive coaching practice, a diagnosis of issues to address could be derived from the results of a psychometric instrument that the company or coach deploys.

The second common perspective for CF in psychological practice is that of the scientist-practitioner. This perspective works from the assumption that through developing and testing hypotheses an accurate picture of the factors influencing the client's behaviour can be identified. In the coaching context, the coach may use multiple sources of information to co-construct the formulation with the coachee, including the coaching conversations and stakeholder input. It can be tempting to commence an engagement with some hypotheses already formed based on the coach's experience and the initial information provided, however coaches should be careful not to determine in advance what hypotheses will fit the coachee's situation (Corrie & Lane 2010, Lane & Corrie 2009).

Formulation based on a theory-led perspective is the third type of approach identified by Corrie and Lane (2010). In this case, the formulation is based on a particular theory. In executive coaching this could be a theory about leadership and leadership development, an approach to adult development and learning, or a psychological theory. The selected theory would guide the information that is sought, sorted and judged and will provide structure to the CF as well as an understanding of the coachee's case. The theoretical perspective will often direct the coach's attention to certain areas and information over others and in this way could mean that certain aspects of the case may be overlooked. Multiple theories or meta-theories can be

used to address this issue but this raises its own issues of maintaining a theoretically coherent account.

In applying theoretical approaches, a coach needs to be conscious of whether they are selecting a theory to fit with the specific coachee or matching a coachee to the specific theory (Corrie & Lane 2010). Both approaches have potential drawbacks. If a coach works from one or multiple theories and applies this to each coachee's case, the question of whether that is the best fit for every coachee arises. If the theory is selected to suit the coachee's needs, expertise in identifying the appropriate theory is needed and the coach would need expertise and professional knowledge in a number of theories.

The fourth approach to formulation is based on some newer psychological approaches; what Corrie and Lane (2010) term the strategic formulation approach. These approaches such as solution-focused, systemic and design-thinking based approaches move away from traditional problem-focused approaches. Instead they draw on what is working well, the strengths of the client that can be leveraged, and search for solutions rather than a focus on understanding the problem. In the coaching field, positive psychology and solution-focused coaching approaches would fit into this perspective.

The final perspective is that of CF as social control (Lane & Corrie 2009, Corrie & Lane 2010). Some criticism of the psychological field has pointed to the use of psychology and associated professions as a form of social control. In the field of coaching we need to consider if our coaching is being used as a way of ensuring compliance to a set of corporate beliefs within an organisation or if the coaching is being used as a way of addressing 'bad' behaviour, ensuring compliance with a superior's approaches or as a last attempt to improve performance before the person's employment is terminated. Coaches need to be alert to the potential for their services to be deployed in this way and take appropriate action to avoid becoming part of a system working to control or obtain certain outcomes.

In addition, Corrie and Lane (2010) identify that some critics of the psychological approach point to the emphasis placed on the individual's responsibility for change and not on the factors in the context which may be blocking or causing certain behaviours or situations. In an executive coaching context this could mean that the

coach needs to consider the wider context in which the coachee is situated, such as cultural factors including corporate and national cultures, as well as broader societal, economic and political factors of a particular coachee's case.

Process

Having defined the purpose and perspectives informing a formulation, the coach can proceed to designing a process to fit the circumstances of the specific case. Lane and Corrie (2009) have stated that “process is what happens as you work. It refers to what an outsider, the client or sponsor would observe” (p204). Process needs to follow the definition of purpose and perspectives in order to avoid becoming a technical application that is not informed by a sound theoretical or psychological approach. The process is a high-level structure for how a practitioner plans to work with the case. For example, what data will be collected and from what sources, what are the specific interventions, tools and techniques that might be used and how will the overall process be structured? Detailing the process at a high level also provides an opportunity for defining how the process will be monitored for effectiveness and a way for deciding whether or not to change the process.

The PPP model (Lane & Corrie 2009, Corrie & Lane 2010) was a foundation for the purpose and account elements of the PAIR framework. However, in terms of the implementation of using CF in coaching practice, the PPP model does not provide a step-by-step guide on how to develop a CF and what should be included. The PPP model, while drawing on the existing literature and research in CF, is still largely a theoretical framework and further research that supports the key elements of the model would be a useful addition to the field, particularly in how this model relates to the field of coaching.

3.7.6 Creating a case formulation

In this project, deciding what to include in the formulation and how to construct it was an experimental process albeit one that was informed by concepts from the literature. Several processes for creating a CF were considered and trialled.

Nezu et al. (2004) have argued that complex problems require complex solutions and their approach to CF is a problem-solving approach. They argue that behaviour emerges from the action and interaction of numerous variables. These variables form multiple causal chains interacting within a unique network for each individual. These

values can be biological, psychological and social and in order to construct a CF, a systems perspective of these multiple causal chains should be taken. These causal chains may be immediately antecedent to behaviours or may have distal effects, such as developmental history.

Nezu et al. (2004) use the term SORC (stimulus, organismic variable, response, consequence) chains for the causal chains. These SORC chains interact with each other with one chain becoming the stimulus in another. Identifying SORC chains can be useful in identifying multiple points of intervention.

Creating a CF based on this approach first involves exploring a broad range of areas to develop a complete picture of the person's functioning, both current and past, and identifying ultimate outcome goals, the equivalent of the purpose in Corrie and Lane's (2010) PPP model. The next step involves taking a theory-driven perspective to identifying possible causes. Nezu et al. (2004) recommend taking multiple theoretical perspectives to reduce the likelihood of judgemental errors. In the context of these theoretical perspectives, SORC chains can be identified and possible hypotheses generated in the form of a map. These hypotheses can then be tested with the client (social validity) and specific hypothesis testing. This could take the form of further diagnostics in a clinical setting, or exploring particular issues with the client in more depth. From here the options for specific interventions can be identified and decisions made on the approach to take. Decision-making is based on several factors including the likelihood of the client carrying out a particular strategy and the personal or social consequences, both positive and negative of a particular approach.

Vertue and Haig (2008) adopt a similar process in their abductive approach to CF and decision-making and they argue that the abductive approach is a more appropriate approach to clinical reasoning for psychologists than the hypothetic-deductive method often recommended. In the hypothetic-deductive method, a clinician generates hypotheses and tests them indirectly by collecting data that will confirm or disconfirm their hypotheses. An abductive reasoning approach is a form of induction that starts with noticing patterns and attempts to develop one or more plausible explanations for these patterns.

As with the problem-solving approach (Nezu et al. 2004), the abductive approach to CF (Vertue & Haig 2008) starts with data collection and analysis. The second phase

involves inferring causal mechanisms, both distal and proximal and considering factors from biological, social, and psychological domains. A causal model of hypotheses drawing on research, relevant theories and previous experience forms the explanatory account. This explanatory account can then be evaluated based on the ability of the causal model to explain the patterns. The explanatory account should be able to explain the strengths, difficulties, their onset and development, and any interrelationships between factors. Secondly the causal model should be evaluated based on fewest untested assumptions; that is that the assumptions can be evaluated or tested and are supported by existing research. The causal model that has the least causal factors and factors that are supported by theory and research are preferred. Finally, the causal model should be evaluated on the basis of whether it is analogous to a previously successful approach or not. A causal model that includes constructs that have been helpful in explaining previous cases is preferred over one that has not. Once the causal model has been evaluated in this way, the final CF can be described in an explanatory paragraph.

As with the literature relating to coaching models, these approaches to CF reflect the practitioners' perspectives and approaches and are largely a result of the experience and practice of the authors. This does not mean that they are not a useful starting point for considering how to construct CF in the coaching field, but it should be noted that sufficient independent research to support the claims made for these approaches has not been conducted. Vertue and Haig (2008) do base their argument for an abductive approach on research into the decision-making of clinicians such as that of Corderre, Mandin, Harasym and Fick (2003), that demonstrated that those participants who used a pattern recognition such as that involved in abductive reasoning were five to ten times more likely to have diagnostic success than those using a hypothetic-deductive approach.

With this in mind, these approaches can be used to inform an approach to coaching CF but can only be applied in an experimental process while monitoring, evaluating and reflecting on the progress of the coaching, the development of the CF, and the effectiveness of the coach. This research project is considered a starting point for future studies into the application of CF to coaching, and the different approaches that might be effective.

3.8 *Reflective Practitioner*

The concept of reflection and the reflective practitioner is often referred to in fields such as education, medicine, social work and psychology and is equally applicable to the coaching profession.

Many authors trace the roots of today's understanding of reflective practice to the 1933 work of Dewey (Fook & Gardner 2007). Despite this shared foundation there are many views and definitions of what is meant by reflection and a range of terms is used in literature from different fields (Fook & Gardner 2007; Rodgers 2002).

Dewey (1933) differentiated between reflection and other types of thinking and Rodgers (2002) has highlighted several key criteria for reflection from Dewey's work. According to Rodgers (2002), Dewey saw reflection as an ongoing process:

..that moves a learner from one experience into the next with a deeper understanding of relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes the continuity of learning possible and ensures the progress of the individual and, ultimately, society (p.845).

Rodgers (2002) also states that Dewey (1933) saw reflection as a disciplined, systematic and rigorous process, grounded in scientific enquiry. It is this approach that differentiates reflection from simply thinking about something or 'mulling' it over (Fook & Gardner 2007; Rodgers 2002).

Rodgers (2002) also provides a useful examination of the use of the term 'experience' in the context of reflection. In this context, experience is broadly conceived and is not just participation in an event of some sort but could involve engaging with one's own imagination, reading a book or having a discussion with others. It involves interaction between the individual and the environment in which they are currently situated, whether that is with another person, an idea, or the material or natural worlds. Reflection is the process of making sense of an experience, taking the insights or learning from that experience into the next experience.

Where Dewey's (1933) work provided the foundation of the concept of reflection, Schon's (1983, 1987) work applied this to the field of professional practice and understanding how professionals go about making decisions. Schon (1987) differentiated the technical rationality of professionals' formal training and the actual

practice where complex situations defy the application of this knowledge. Schon (1983) describes:

...in the varied topography of professional practice there is a high ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and there is a swampy lowland where situations are confusing 'messes' incapable of technical solution. The difficulty is that the problems of the high ground, however great their technical interest, are often relatively unimportant to clients or the larger society, while in the swamp are the problems of greater interest (p.42).

In more complex executive coaching cases, it is likely that there is not a research-based theory or technique that can be simply applied. Schon (1983) argues that in these cases practitioners generally draw on their implicit and tacit knowledge, their know-how which is acquired through practice; what he terms professional artistry. This professional artistry is developed through reflective practice; reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action.

Schon's (1983, 1987) concept of reflection-on-action is one of stepping back from a situation and reflecting on the experience after it has occurred, for example, a coach reviewing a coaching session after the event and identifying the key learning points that can be taken forward to another similar situation.

Reflection-in-action takes place within the experience and is a process of reflecting on and reshaping our actions as we are doing them. Schon (1987) argues reflection-in-action often hinges on a moment of surprise such as when an intuitive decision did not achieve the expected or previously experienced outcomes. In this situation the practitioner will use reflection-in-action to adjust and adapt, questioning what happened and the assumptions that were made. As practitioners become experienced more of their decisions and actions become intuitive, and their practice can become over-learned, narrow and rigid and they experience less of these surprising moments. In this case, they need to more actively pursue reflection-in-action in order to address their over-learned practice.

Reflective practice involves questioning the assumptions and tacit knowledge that underpin a judgement or intuition made in a particular situation. Fook and Gardner (2007) argue that reflection can provide insights into aspects of practice that are not part of the traditional formal view, such as intuition and artistry. These forms of professional know-how can be subjected to scrutiny through reflection and therefore

improve both the individual's practice but also contribute to understanding other ways of 'knowing' in professional practice.

Fook and Gardner (2007) have also argued that in a complex and challenging environment, the application of the formal or informal training may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the situation. In these situations they argue, professionals need to adapt to the changing conditions. This might require developing knowledge that is seen as useful and relevant to these uncertain and ambiguous situations, using professional artistry to combine different elements of knowledge to suit a unique situation.

Despite the prevalence of literature discussing the importance of reflective practice, in many professions there is little rigorous research that has linked the benefits of reflective practice to improved outcomes to clients of these professionals. There are some studies in the nursing field that provide some evidence for personal transformation such as gaining insights into their practice (Collington & Hunt 2006; Turner & Belloes 2007), questioning and challenging their practice, and individual change (Glaze 2001). In the field of higher education and teaching, Morrison (1996) found that student teachers experienced increased motivation for learning, growing self-awareness and changing and widening perspectives on issues. However, Morrison (1996) also discovered that many of the students found the process could be painful as they gained growing awareness of their lack of expertise and the complexity of many of the issues they were exploring. Brookfield (1993) also highlights some of the dangers of reflection for practitioners as they realise the never-ending journey of finding their way through a messy and complex practice (in this case he is referring to nursing) and that as existing assumptions and knowledge are challenged, the practitioner feels as if they have lost their footing and confidence in their capability.

There is little in the literature that explores reflective practice as it relates to the executive coaching field. In one example, Jackson (2004) explores his experiences of reflective practice and proposes a model for coaching practitioners. There are several papers from the field of sports coaching exploring reflective practice and the benefits for increased coaching effectiveness (Carson 2008; Gilbert & Trudel 2001), which might be applicable to executive coaching.

There is much that the coaching field can learn from other disciplines in regards to implementing reflective practice. However, more research is required to develop an understanding of the efficacy, potential benefits, processes and models of reflective executive coaching practice.

3.9 *Conclusion*

The literature reviewed in this section provides the context for the research project as well as grounding the PAIR framework in the existing relevant literature. The use of a transdisciplinary approach was useful in developing a broader perspective on what is required for not only a leader's capability to navigate complexity but also what is needed in a coaching framework that would support the effectiveness of coaches working with complex cases.

Much of the research in the fields reviewed is still at an early stage. There are many theoretical perspectives, practitioner models and limited robust research that supports the efficacy of the recommended approaches. However, this literature does provide a theoretical base and a starting point for the development of the PAIR framework and the application of CF to executive coaching. It also identifies some of the issues that can be explored in this and further research such as the benefits of reflective practice for coaches, evaluating approaches to CF, the outcomes and efficacy of CF in executive coaching, and the capabilities needed for both executives and coaches in navigating complexity.

4 Methodology, Methods and Project Activity

This section provides the background to the methodology selected for this project. A brief summary of the Critical Realist (CR) perspective on research is followed by an overview of the Realistic Evaluation (RE) approach and how it has been adapted and implemented in this project. This is followed by a description of the methods used, primary activities at each stage and the steps taken to ensure the rigour of the research project.

4.1 *Critical Realism and Research*

From the critical realist perspective it is the role of science to develop theories which explain reality (Fox, Martin & Green 2007). Knowledge is seen as accumulating over time and as being fallible. Therefore any knowledge is considered the best truth we have at this time and any theories that are developed are considered a starting point for future research so that they can be evaluated again (Danermark et al. 2002).

The stratified nature of reality means that research is more than simply observing events in the empirical domain and developing theories to explain them. Research needs to go beyond the surface observations and explore the 'deep' domain, identifying the structures and other mechanisms that have the tendency to cause particular outcomes (Clark, Lissel & Davis, 2008).

In the social realm there are likely to be multiple causal interacting mechanisms that may reinforce or interfere and hinder each other, making it hard to untangle all the interacting factors. However, Pawson (2006) argues that the rhythms and associations of social systems are constant enough that we can navigate through them and therefore research can establish patterns of mechanisms that have a tendency to produce a set of outcomes in certain contexts (Oliver 2012).

As it is not possible to observe events and mechanisms that may occur in the actual and deep domains, there are two forms of logic needed to explore these domains of reality; abduction and retroduction (Danermark et al. 2002). Both are necessary because they are the forms of reasoning that attempt to uncover the mechanisms that may be causing a particular outcome. Abductive thinking is a form of logic that reviews data through many possible theoretical explanations and then tests these explanations by further examination of the data (Oliver 2012). Retroduction involves moving backwards from the outcome or event being studied to ask 'what must be true

in order for this to be happening?’ (Easton 2010), which requires the creative ability to generate ideas about the relationships and interactions between different mechanisms and structures (Danermark et al. 2002).

Critical realists argue that there is no unmediated access to knowledge of what is real – it is always influenced by our store of theories, mental models and experiences and therefore it is impossible to make objective observations (Fleetwood 2005). This leads to predominantly a qualitative approach to research where a CR perspective is employed (Fleetwood & Hesketh 2010), although mixed methods and some quantitative measures may be used (Robson 2002). For example, a quantitative method may be used to identify patterns of outcomes that appear in the empirical domain of reality and qualitative methods used to understand the mechanisms.

CR has been criticised as being a philosophy in search of a methodology and methods and that there are many questions that remain in terms of how a researcher would operationalise a piece of CR research (Yeung 1997). However, the benefit of this lack of prescribed methods is that CR research methodology can draw on a range of methods and select those that best suit the purpose and subject of the investigation (Danermark et al. 2002).

There is very limited application of a CR perspective to research in the psychological sciences. O’Mahoney (2011) reviewed the research in the social sciences and of the 359 articles using a CR perspective that were published between 1990 and 2009, only 2.1% were published in psychology, applied psychology or psychiatry journals. However, the CR perspective has much to offer these fields as it provides a way to explore not only the internalities such as emotions, tendencies and traits but also how these factors engage with external societal factors via actions. In addition, it provides a way of exploring how the structures in the social realm can influence these internalities (O’Mahoney 2011).

4.2 Project Methodology

This research explores not just the outcomes of the coaching but also attempts to explain these patterns by positing mechanisms that have the tendency to generate those outcomes and in which contexts (organisational, cultural, local, historical or individual) these mechanisms are activated; a thick explanation looking at what

Pawson and Tilley (1997) term causal context, mechanism and outcome (CMO) configurations.

A qualitative methodology based on an RE framework was selected as it provides the scope for exploring not just the observed outcomes in the empirical domain but also attempts to understand the complexity of interactions between mechanisms and contexts that make the coaching model effective or not.

Pawson and Tilley (1997) are critical of traditional approaches to evaluation studies, arguing that they have failed to deliver the promised outcomes of enabling research-driven policy-making for large-scale social change initiatives. They are equally critical of both positivist and constructivist research traditions, primarily because they fail to adequately deal with the context in which the programmes are delivered and fail to take into account the concepts of structure and agency. Pawson and Tilley (1997) argue that the RE approach addresses these criticisms, delivering not only an understanding of the outcomes but also providing insight into what is it about the programme that delivers those patterns of outcomes for which people and in what contexts. Pawson and Tilley (1997) have argued that the versatility of RE research designs and the openness to different research methods means that RE can be used in many different situations; short-term or long-term, individually-orientated or community-based.

Programme interventions are generally aimed at driving some form of behavioural change. In an RE approach, the programme is seen as containing mechanisms that may generate change, however whether a programme 'works' or not will depend on the interaction of these mechanisms with the reasoning of the participant. Any effects of the programme are not produced by the programme itself but through the active engagement of the participant (Pawson 2006), such as the engagement of the coachee with the coaching programme.

However, these interactions take place within a context; any intervention is inserted into existing conditions that will either enable or constrain the choices and actions of the participants. There are layers of context including the individual capacities of the key actors in the programme and the interpersonal relationships that support the intervention. This takes place in the context of the institutional setting within the broader social and cultural system. All programmes and interventions are conditioned

by the interactions of the factors in layer upon layer of contextual factors (Pawson 2006).

In the case of this project, the coaching framework and programme interact with the individual capacities of the coach and coachee in terms of motivations, capability and credibility, as well as the interpersonal relationships of the coachee in their work context. These factors interact with the structural factors that may constrain or enable the choices and actions the coachee makes within the organisational and broader social context.

4.2.1 Role of theory in realistic evaluation

In RE, theory takes the form of CMO configurations that seek to explain why an individual within a particular context responds in a particular way to an intervention or aspect of an intervention. These theories are developed at different levels of abstraction or specification. At the highest level of abstraction is the theory that all programmes or social processes can be simplified to CMO configurations that represent the essential core of attributes of those programmes. At a level of greatest specificity are the potentially hundreds of CMO configurations that fill out the picture of what makes a programme work for whom in which contexts (Pawson & Tilley 1997).

The two levels of theory primarily used in this project are what Blamey & Mackenzie (2007) term programme theories and implementation theories. These theories are developed from both existing research and theory as well as through the experience of practitioners in the field.

Programme theories may consist of families of CMO configurations that are specific but still at a level of abstraction that they can apply to multiple programme situations (Pawson & Tilley 1997). These programme theories represent a small core of ideas from which a multitude of more specific propositions (implementation theory) can be developed.

Implementation theory contains more specific and detailed hypotheses in the form of CMO configurations that articulate the aspects of how a programme or initiative is delivered in practice. Both forms of theories are seen as a starting point for research and are revised and adapted in a cumulative fashion within projects and over successive studies. An RE methodology is not aiming to generalise findings from one

study to wide populations. Instead the aim is the continual betterment of practice through an iterative and cumulative research approach that generates and refines a body of theory that makes sense of one case after another. Individual research studies provide the detail of any one programme but what is transferable from one programme to another is a set of ideas in the form of programme and implementation theories (Pawson & Tilley 1997).

4.2.2 Realistic evaluation research design

The approach to RE that Pawson and Tilley (1997) outline provides a high-level research design but does not specify a detailed process, however the research cycle that they describe has been turned into a set of steps by other researchers. Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) have identified four phases to RE research and it is this process that has been adapted as a framework for this project. The research cycle applied in this project is illustrated in figure 1 (p.17).

In RE the first research phase is used to develop an understanding of the programme that is to be evaluated. This includes identifying the target population, the setting in which the programme will operate, and understanding the prevailing theories about what would work in what contexts.

In this project phase one aimed to understand the context for executives in terms of the complexity in the current business environment. The possible outcomes of a coaching programme were also identified by developing a picture of the capabilities required for an executive to effectively navigate this complexity. These identified capabilities were used to select appropriate measures for the coaching case studies. In addition, an understanding of possible approaches to the coaching framework were investigated. Figure 2 below illustrates the main components of phase one.

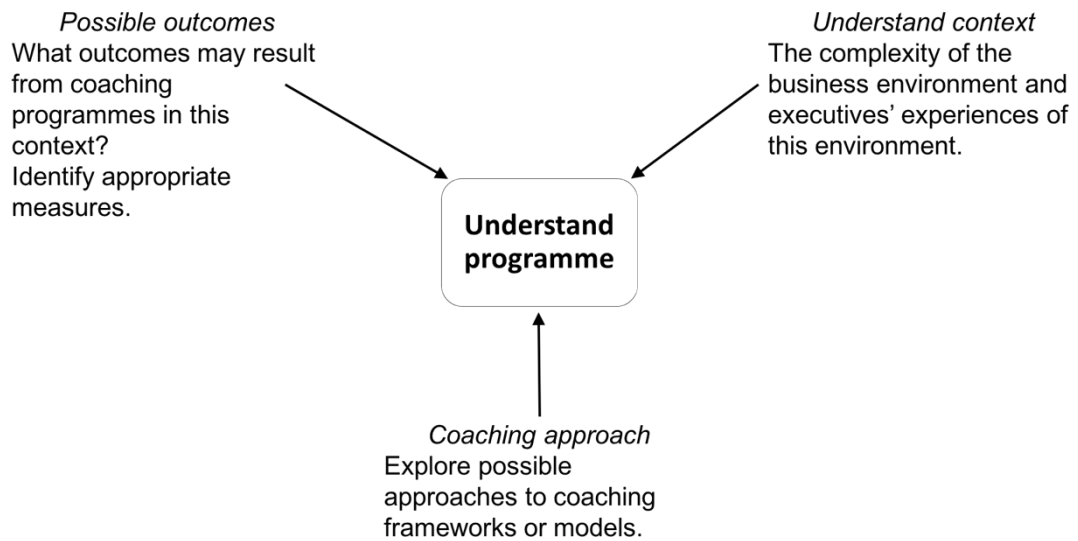


Figure 2 Research design phase 1

Drawing on practitioner knowledge and relevant literature, the second phase of an RE approach involves developing programme and implementation theories. These theories are a set of hypotheses that articulate how the programme is expected to generate outcomes in which contexts.

For this project, phase two involved articulating the implicit programme and implementation theories that were embedded in the first version of the coaching framework, a CF approach to coaching based on the PPP framework (Corrie & Lane 2010). These hypotheses were articulated in the form of CMO configurations that would be reviewed and revised through the research.

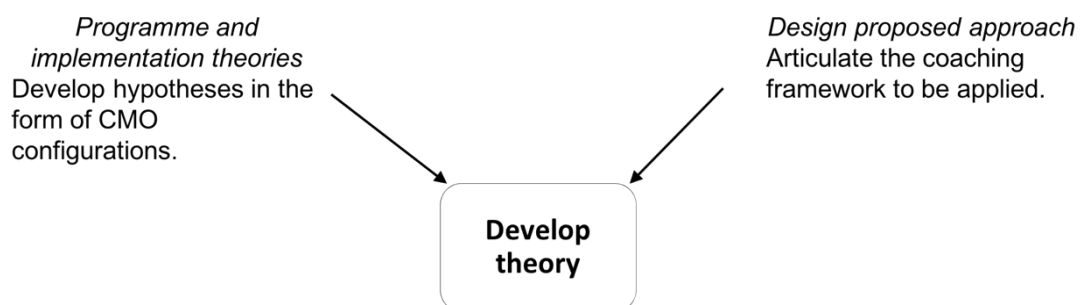


Figure 3 Research design phase 2

Phase three is an outcome enquiry that investigates how a programme might work in practice, collecting data on outcomes, mechanisms and context factors in order to test the initial hypotheses and to revise the CMO configurations.

In this project, phase three involved applying the coaching framework to coaching programmes with 12 executives. This phase was conducted in two cycles, with the

initial coaching framework being piloted with a cohort of five executives in Sydney. An initial review of the data from this first cohort led to some adaptations to the coaching approach, which was then applied with a second cohort of seven executives in Singapore, Mongolia and Malaysia. Phase three activities are illustrated in figure 4.

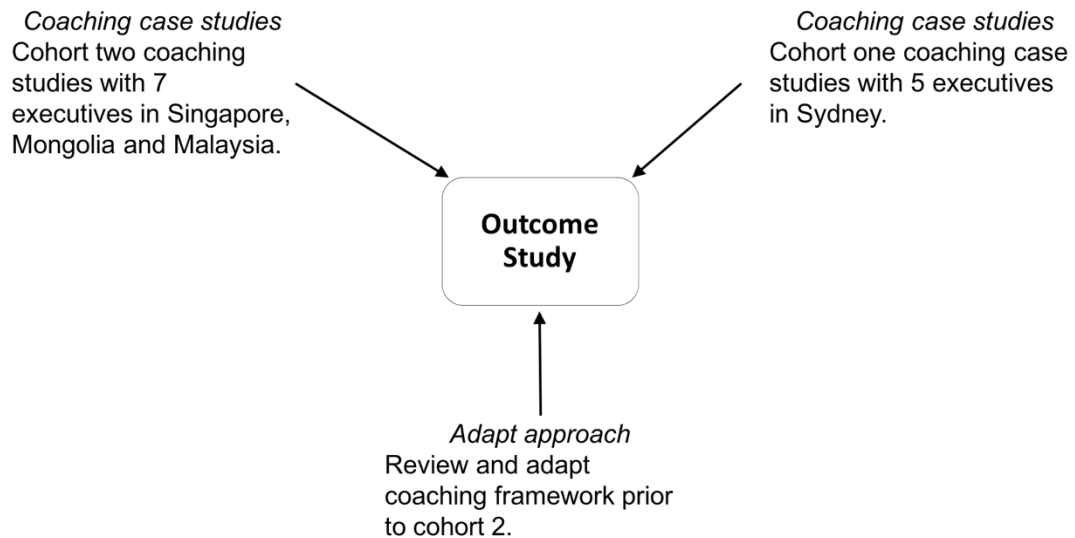


Figure 4 Research design phase 3

The fourth phase involves completing data analysis to identify programme outcomes and to link them to patterns of context factors and mechanisms. This results in a refinement and expansion of the programme and implementation theories that inform future practice and research (Blamey & Mackenzie 2007).

In this project, the data analysis involved reviewing the outcomes of each of the coaching programmes and linking these to the mechanisms and context factors that emerged from the case study data. As a result, additional CMO configurations were identified and the initial hypotheses were consequently refined and expanded. The techniques and approaches used to complete this analysis are described in section 4.8.

The data analysis led to a further revision of the coaching framework, the result of which is the PAIR framework that is documented in section 6.5. The revised programme and implementation theories can form the starting point for additional research into the use of the PAIR framework in general, elements of the framework or specific coaching interventions. Phase four is illustrated in figure 5 below.

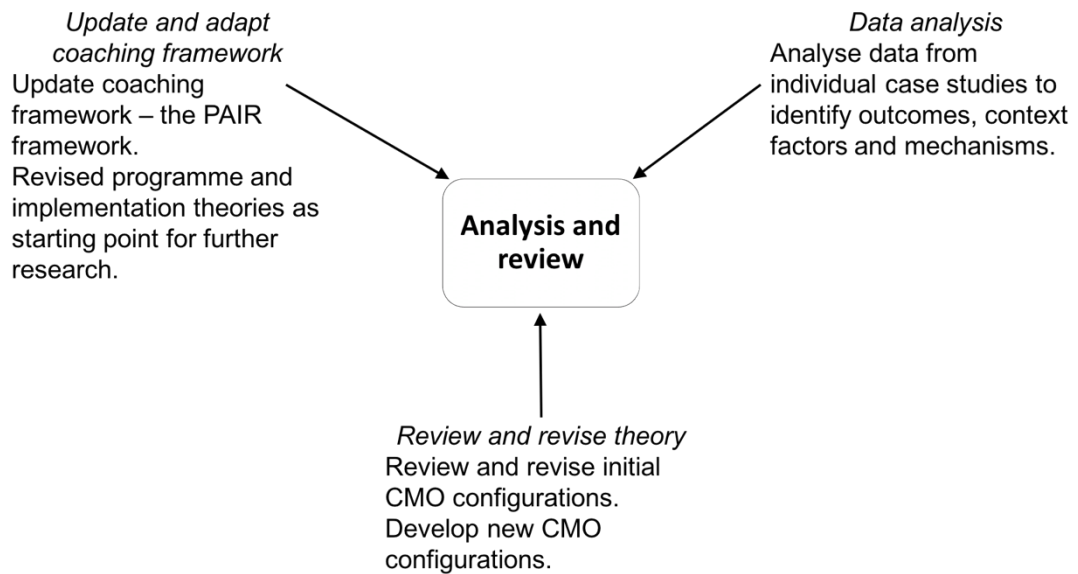


Figure 5 Research design phase 4

4.2.3 Why This Approach?

Several other approaches to the research project were considered. Possibilities included quasi-experimental studies such as implementing a coaching framework with a group of executives and measuring the effect on their ability to navigate complexity, or a project that tested the effectiveness of several different approaches to coaching. As the focus of these types of studies would be on the outcomes of a programme rather than what makes a framework or programme effective, I decided that an RE approach was more consistent with practitioner research and the current early stage of research into the application of CF to executive coaching.

A pure action-research approach was also considered, but I decided that the RE approach provided more structure, and the concepts of mechanisms, contexts and outcomes provides a useful framework in which to develop and evaluate the coaching.

Grounded theory is another methodology that could be used in research of this kind. However, there are several philosophical elements of a grounded theory approach that are not consistent with a CR perspective. Grounded theory traditionally relies on the development of new theories through a concurrent process of data collection and analysis (Oliver 2012) and the research does not begin with specific hypotheses, theories or research questions (Gray 2009). As a CR perspective argues that all our knowledge is theory-laden and data is seen through a mindset of our existing theories and assumptions, this would not be consistent with a traditional grounded theory

approach. An RE approach recognises that we bring our own store of knowledge, experiences and mental models to any research project and RE research design uses this knowledge in developing theories about how a programme should be designed, while retaining an open mind that these theories may not be supported in the research.

Selecting an RE approach presented a number of challenges for the research. There is a lack of research that shows how RE works in practice (Astbury 2013) and none that apply this approach to psychological sciences and evaluating coaching interventions. This meant that there was little structure or guidance on how to design the research. However, the high-level four-phase design put some structure around the RE approach and supported me in working through the research process. The challenges of using the RE methodology are discussed in section 6.7.6.

Some authors have questioned if the methodology can handle evaluation of programmes that involve complex interactions (Marchal, van Belle, van Olmen, Hoérée & Kegels 2012) such as those involved in executive coaching programmes. Representing theories in the format of CMO configurations presented in tables may imply a linear relationship that is simple and easy to identify, whereas complex programmes are likely to contain multi-mechanism interactions, linked chains of interactions where outcomes from one interaction will form the context for other intervention components (Astbury 2013).

Despite these challenges, the RE approach appears to be ideally suited to the world of practitioner research. The cumulative approach to knowledge generation and recognition of different ways of knowing is supportive of practitioners using knowledge generated through practice to generate theories for further investigation. The lack of specific methodology and methods means that there is considerable flexibility for the researcher to use approaches that suit the real-world context where formal experiments are difficult to set up and not necessarily appropriate. Finally, practitioners often want to understand what makes their programme or intervention work for whom and in what contexts, a question that RE seeks to answer.

Using RE for this research however, does raise the question of whether it can accommodate a practitioner-researcher as most RE studies have been conducted by researchers who are separate from the programme implementation team. This is a

challenge for practitioner-researchers regardless of their selected methodology. Practitioner-researchers are required to maintain a reflexive approach, which involves constantly reflecting on their influence on the research process (Gray 2009). In this project, the research diary and reflections on the coaching sessions facilitated this reflexive stance. In addition, the practitioner- researcher's interpretations of situations and data should be verified where possible. In this project this was achieved through interviews with the research participants and their managers, as well as collecting data through a range of data sources.

In summary, the RE methodology provides a framework for investigating the research questions in a way that is consistent with my perspectives and with a practitioner-researcher model. While RE is a relatively new approach, the flexibility of research methods it offers means that it can be adapted to suit this project. Developing and using this methodology has also provided me with an opportunity to develop an approach that can make a contribution to the field of coaching practitioner research beyond the research outcomes themselves by demonstrating how RE can be used in this field.

Having outlined the broad methodology employed, this section outlines the methods used for each phase of the research and the main activities at each stage.

4.3 Phase one: understanding context and outcomes

The primary methods for gathering data for this phase were desk research involving literature review along with interviews with executives, HR executives and professional coaches. This approach provided perspectives from the literature, coaching practitioners, purchasers of coaching services and coachees themselves.

To identify the literature to be analysed, a search of the databases was made through Summon (Middlesex University Library Resource). Literature was selected based on the criteria of relevance, theoretical perspectives and quality of the material, such as whether it was in a peer-reviewed journal or not. The search terms used were 'complexity and leadership capabilities'; 'complexity and leadership'; 'complexity and executive coaching'. In selecting the theoretical perspectives to explore, I chose those perspectives of which I had some knowledge and that I felt could be incorporated into my coaching practice. I selected leadership and leadership development fields, organisational psychology, complexity and systems theories, constructive-

developmental theory and coaching psychology as theoretical perspectives. Within these fields I identified literature that specifically addressed the issue of complexity and leadership capabilities.

Having gathered the initial selection of literature, a scan of the material was made to gain a sense of the key themes and to categorise these themes. This first reading also alerted me to other relevant literature through the references they contained.

A spreadsheet with the following columns was set up to capture these key themes:

- Perspectives – the author's perspectives, e.g. organisational psychology.
- Definitions – how they defined relevant terms.
- Examples – useful metaphors or examples of complexity.
- Leadership approaches – specific approaches to leadership in complex environments.
- Behaviours or capabilities – specific behavioural competencies.
- Psychological factors – thinking styles, psychological traits or states.
- Development – ideas for developing these capabilities.
- Reflections – my own reflections or questions.

Each document was read and the key points under each of these headings were captured in the spreadsheet. This provided a consolidated view of all the literature and contained all the data in one place.

The next step was to identify the key themes and integrate them into a framework using various forms of data displays, such as spreadsheets and mind-maps. Initially, I categorised the items from the initial spreadsheet into high level themes such as 'collaborative leadership style', 'tolerance of ambiguity' or 'culture of innovation'. Using a method of flip charts and post-it® notes to experiment with different groupings and themes, it became clear that these themes could be organised into three categories of interpersonal, intrapersonal, or environmental elements. These themes and categories became the Navigator framework described in section 6.1.3.

Simultaneously to the literature review activities, interviews were conducted to gather data from executives and professional coaches. Interviews were conducted with seven executives and four coaches based in Sydney. A human resources (HR) focus group with 14 participants was also conducted. The seven executives were selected because they worked for large organisations dealing in complex environments and

were working at C-level or reporting to C-level executives. The 14 HR professionals came from large organisations, mostly global multinationals, and were experienced in leadership development and talent management. The executive coaches were experienced in dealing with senior executives and had been coaching for ten years or more.

A semi-structured interview format was selected as this approach provided a core framework of questions but allowed the researcher to ask additional questions in order to ensure a shared understanding of the interviewees' perspectives, to ask follow-up questions and to further pursue the interviewees' lines of thought (Gray 2009).

In developing the questions, I kept in mind my secondary research questions (Q2, Q3) and was guided by the framework of the CMO structure of theories in RE research. I was interested in collecting data that related to the context of how executives saw complexity in their business and roles, along with potential outcomes of the coaching in terms of capabilities they needed. I also wanted to use this data to triangulate with the literature search data and to provide real-life examples and illustrations of the business context. To identify the core questions I developed a list of potential questions that could be used and selected those questions that would stimulate quite broad thinking initially and then narrow the answers to their specific circumstances and specific capabilities.

The core interview questions were:

- In what way do you see the business world as complex, ambiguous and uncertain?
 - In what do you see your role as complex?
 - What capabilities do you think executives need to be able to deal with complexity effectively?

In interviewing the coaches, the questions took the next step of asking what coaching approaches, models or techniques they used or thought would be appropriate in assisting coachees to develop these capabilities. In hindsight, I could also have asked this question of the executives as they may have had a view of what would be or had been effective for them.

The interviews and focus group were recorded using a voice recording application (HT recording app), which provided adequate quality recordings for transcription. All the interviews were transcribed and the analysis carried out through the use of the written copy. A first read-through was conducted and key points underlined. A second read-through identified additional points and in a final read-through, I added my notations for possible codes that represented the themes of the phrases underlined. A data display spreadsheet was set up with the following columns:

- In what ways is the business world complex?
- In what ways are executives' roles complex?
- Capabilities required?

The key phrases and examples from each transcript were entered into the spreadsheet for each participant and the key themes were identified. The number of times each key theme was mentioned by different participants was counted to identify the top themes. A further read-through of the transcripts was conducted to identify specific examples that could be used as quotations to illustrate the key points and that also supported the themes emerging from the literature review.

The final activity for phase one was to identify an appropriate coaching approach. Literature on executive coaching, coaching psychology and coaching models and frameworks was selected and reviewed. The literature was critically reviewed and ideas for approaches to a coaching approach were developed through reflection in my learning journal. The challenge was to develop a framework that was flexible enough to use with individual coachees but that represented a programme theory that would apply across multiple cases.

During this activity I read *Constructing stories, telling tales. A guide to formulation in applied psychology* (Corrie & Lane 2010), which sparked the realisation that a CF approach could form the basis of a coaching framework.

4.4 Phase two: developing programme and implementation theories

Having identified that a CF approach might be an effective approach in the context of complex coaching assignments, I used the PPP structure (Corrie & Lane 2010), as a high-level framework for designing the coaching approach. How this was applied to the coaching case studies is described in detail in section 4.5.

Implicit in this framework are the theories that form the starting point for the rest of the research project. CMO configurations were developed by analysing the PPP framework (Corrie & Lane 2010), and identifying the appropriate context, mechanism and outcome factors. These initial hypotheses were supplemented with relevant concepts from the existing research and theory in coaching, CF and related fields, as well as my experience in coaching.

Based on the application of a CF approach to coaching the overarching programme theory for this research is:

In complex executive coaching cases, such as developing leadership capabilities to navigate complexity (context), a coaching framework using CF that is applied by an experienced coach to design a programme to meet the individual's needs in their context (mechanism), will enable positive changes in an executive's capability and achievement of the agreed purpose of the coaching (outcome).

By reviewing the more detailed implementation theories embedded in the PPP framework, an additional 8 CMO configurations were developed. These are documented in section 6.2.

4.5 Phase three: outcome study

The method for gathering the data for the outcome study was two sets of case studies with a total of 12 coachees conducted in two cohorts, which were conducted approximately one year apart. The first step was to recruit suitable participants for the coaching programme.

The participants for cohort one were recruited through contacts with the HR teams in the organisations with which MB Consulting worked. I provided an overview of the project and then HR teams nominated participants. I requested that nominated participants were relatively senior executives or managers who were dealing with complex environments. I also required that they could commit the time to participate, that the managers were supportive of the project, that they were managing teams of people and were not currently taking part in any other coaching programmes.

HR had an initial discussion with the potential participants and then I met with them to gain informed consent. This was done through a document explaining the details

of the programme and what was required from the participants. This document is included in appendix 1.

Having gained informed consent, the participants completed the Brain Resources WebNeuro Wellness screening test to ensure that there were no potential mental wellbeing issues that would preclude them from participating in the programme. The WebNeuro is an online clinical decision support system that screens for mental health issues using the Brain Resource Inventory of Social Cognition (BRISC) plus additional cognitive tests (WebNeuro), which provide information to support the self-report answers given in the BRISC. The BRISC assesses measures of self-regulation and also includes the well-validated Depression Anxiety and Stress Survey (DASS) (Lovibond & Lovibond 2005). Poor self-regulation has been found to be common in a range of mental health issues (Brain Resource 2010). The WebNeuro has sound psychometric properties and Brain Resource provided support on any questions that arose from the testing. MB Consulting regularly used the WebNeuro Wellness screening as part of executive coaching assessment and therefore it was considered ethical to use this as part of the screening for cohort one and all participants scored within the normal range.

I initially recruited six participants for the first cohort. However, one participant withdrew due to pressure of work and the need to travel extensively, leaving me with five participants. I made the decision not to recruit a replacement but instead to recruit seven for the second cohort. This decision was based on the lack of availability of an additional person and the time needed to recruit this person who would then be progressing through the programme on a different time scale.

During the time when I was completing the coaching programmes with cohort one, I was offered a position as CEO of MB Consulting in Singapore. I moved to Singapore over a period of six months (February to August 2012); this required me to recruit my second cohort of case study participants in Singapore.

The make-up of the second cohort introduced both cross-cultural and virtual coaching complexities into the coaching programmes as most were South East Asian participants and two were based remotely.

Two changes were made to the recruitment process to take into consideration the cultural context. As the cohort had all been volunteered by HR and considering the hierarchical nature of Singaporean workplace culture, I spent extra time explaining the process and ensuring that they were volunteering for the project, rather than taking part because HR had mandated their participation. I also established with both HR and the participant that there would be no negative consequences if they chose not to take part.

Secondly, I made the decision not to use WebNeuro Wellness to screen this cohort. The reasons and ethical considerations for this decision are discussed in section 5.1.

In both cohorts, each coachee participated in a coaching programme over six to nine months and the following data collection methods were used for evaluating the outcomes, and identifying context factors and mechanisms:

- Pre and post-programme interview with the coachee.
- Coachee's feedback collected in an interview post-coaching programme.
- Interview with the manager pre and post the coaching programme.
- A 360° survey – the Leadership Versatility Index (LVI).
- Audio recordings of the coaching sessions.
- Coach's notes from the sessions.
- Coachee's notes from the sessions.
- Coachee's reflective diary.
- Coach's reflections.

Having these multiple data sources provided a form of data triangulation. My interpretation of the data from the coaching process could be triangulated with the coachees' and managers' perceptions.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect pre and post-coaching data from both the manager and participants. The questions were devised by considering the data that I would need for later data analysis and theory development and I constructed the questions to identify context factors, mechanisms and outcomes. I considered the findings from the literature and the executive interviews in terms of some of the potential context factors at an individual level, for example, belief in ability to change and develop. I developed a final list of core questions by considering what

the manager and participant would have knowledge of and be able to answer in sufficient detail.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed and the key themes from the interviews were summarised in a data sheet for later analysis.

Pre-programme interviews

The manager and participant were asked the same core questions for the pre-programme interview, allowing me to compare their answers. The depth of relationship between the manager and participant was established by gathering background on how long they had worked together, amount of contact that they had and whether the manager felt they knew the participant well enough to confidently answer the questions. This information was captured and considered when reviewing and comparing the answers.

The following table provides the questions asked and the rationale for each of the questions. The questions below are the manager version and for the participant, {name} was replaced by 'your' or 'you'.

Question	Rationale
1. In what ways do you see {name}'s role as complex?	Context in terms of the role, the environment and organisation.
2. What capabilities do you think they need in order to navigate complexity effectively?	Identifying possible outcomes of the coaching as well as comparing the manager and participant's view of strengths and development areas.
3. Which of those capabilities do you think are strengths of {name}?	
4. Which of those capabilities do you think are areas for development for {name}?	
5. In your view, what makes an effective leader?	Context in the way of the manager's approach to leadership, which may also reflect leadership culture in the organisation. Comparing participant and managers answers could indicate shared view of leadership or leadership culture.

Question	Rationale
<p>6. Thinking about the organisation what factors (people, processes, culture etc.) do you think will assist in {name's} development and in applying new ways of thinking and behaving?</p> <p>What factors might hinder {name}?</p>	Understanding structural factors that form part of the context for the coaching programme.

Table 3 Pre-programme questions and rationale

Post-programme interviews

A shortened set of questions was asked of the manager in the post-programme interview with the primary aim of understanding outcomes from the coaching. The questions were designed to identify any changes that the manager had observed in the participant. These questions also provided triangulation on the data from the observations of the coachee, coach and the 360° survey.

Question	Rationale
<p>1. What do you consider the participants strengths in dealing with complexity? What are their areas for development?</p>	Identifying if capabilities have changed or moved from a development need in order to compare with the 360° survey and track any observed changes (outcome).
<p>2. What changes in leadership style have you noticed in the participant, if any, over the last six to nine months? Can you provide any specific examples?</p>	Asking more directly for any observed changes (outcome).
<p>3. What specific outcomes has the participant achieved in the last six months?</p>	Identifying if specific achievements have been noted to compare to coaching goals and the participant's own reflections (outcome).
<p>4. What specific feedback about the coaching has the participant shared with you about the coaching programme, if any? What was useful for them, what wasn't useful?</p>	Identifying outcomes and possible mechanisms of the coaching. The confidentiality of the coaching was not compromised as the manager was only asked to share what the participant had been willing to share with them voluntarily in the normal course of their conversations. The managers were not asked to specifically question the participants regarding the coaching.
<p>5. Was there anything that supported or hindered their development</p>	Structures or mechanisms that would support or hinder the coachee in their context.

Table 4 Post-programme interview questions and rationale

For the participants, questions one to six of the pre-programme interview were asked again in order to establish if there was any change in the participant's thinking such as changed perception of their role and its complexity, for example could they see more complexity or different elements of complexity. Additional questions that related specifically to the coaching programme and the outcomes achieved were also asked.

Question	Rationale
Thinking about the coaching process; what worked well for you? Can you think of any specific examples which you consider particular turning points, learning moments or insights?	Identifying mechanisms of the coaching programme.
What didn't work well for you? Were there any times when the coaching was unhelpful or even a negative influence?	Identifying any hindering mechanisms in the coaching.
What are the examples of things you have gained from the coaching? (Skills, insights, changes in perspectives, thinking or behaving).	Identifying specific outcomes in terms of changes in thinking and behaviour.
Can you provide any examples of situations or challenges that you handled differently as a result of the coaching? In what way was this different?	Gathering examples of specific changes that they put into practice and the results of doing that (outcomes).

Table 5 Participant post-programme interview questions and rationale

360° survey instrument

In addition to the interview data, a 360° survey was used to gather data about the participant from a wider group of colleagues. While a 360° survey may be more common in a quantitative study, it is not uncommon to use quantitative methods to collect data in research in the CR paradigm (Robson 2002).

To select an appropriate 360° instrument I reviewed the capabilities that were important in being able to navigate complexity. One of the key capabilities that was common amongst the viewpoints found in the literature was that of having a broad range of leadership behaviours, or what is termed leadership versatility.

In my literature search I discovered the work of Kaiser and Overfield (2010) in measuring versatility with the Leadership Versatility Index (LVI). The LVI takes a different approach to measuring leadership behaviours and effectiveness. The assumption on which most tools are based is that more of a specific behaviour is

better and executives are rated on a standard five point Likert scale, with a high score being the preferred result. The theory underpinning the LVI recognises that too much of a certain behaviour can sometimes be as much of a problem as too little. The LVI looks to measure balance between complementary but opposing pairs of behaviour. In the LVI there is a nine point scale with the ideal score being zero, with underdoing to the left (-4) and overdoing to the right (+4). Using this approach to measuring leadership behaviours, the LVI measures four dimensions of leadership behaviour arranged as diametrically opposed pairs; strategic vs. operational, and forceful vs. enabling. Twelve items comprise each leadership dimension (Kaplan DeVries 2010).

The LVI provides an overall leadership versatility score calculated from the scores on the individual items. The score is represented as a percentage, with 100% indicating maximum versatility and balance across all the dimensions and complementary pairs of behaviours. A versatility score is also provided at the level of the forceful vs. enabling and strategic vs. operations dimensions and is also expressed as a percentage. A score of 100% would indicate a balance between these leadership styles.

The forceful vs. enabling dimension evaluates how someone leads and exerts influence; through a top-down, power style or through a more enabling style that creates the conditions for others to contribute. The strategic vs. operational dimensions measure what the manager is focused on; long-term positioning of the company for the future or short-term operational results. The theory behind the instrument is that all dimensions are required in most leadership roles, particularly at more senior levels and that more versatility across these dimensions increases effectiveness (Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

The LVI also takes a measure of effectiveness and the research supporting the development of the LVI found a correlation of 0.71 between an overall versatility score and the ratings of effectiveness of the executives. This correlation was demonstrated in seven separate studies with 1,270 executives where the correlation varied between 0.6 and 0.8 across all the studies (Kaplan DeVries 2010).

The psychometrics of the LVI are rated as being generally favourable with several iterations of the LVI producing improved results between versions. There were several psychometric weaknesses with earlier versions of the LVI, which the later

version has improved (Vassar 2009). There are lower internal consistency estimates for the operational subscale, but the later version is still within what is considered professional standard of practice. Test results also demonstrate no predicted negative relationship between the strategic and operational dimensions although there is a relationship between specific items (growth vs. efficiency) (Kaplan DeVries 2010).

The LVI was selected on the basis that it measured one of the key capabilities that the literature search had identified as helpful in navigating complexity. In addition, it specifically measured in the enabling and strategic scales some of the behaviours that were also identified in the literature and formed part of the Navigator framework. The psychometric properties were considered within the professional standards required for this type of instrument and given the qualitative nature of the research and the real-world setting of the research it was considered ethical to use the LVI in the study. I completed the accreditation process with Kaplan Devries, which involved attending a webinar and completing one supervised debrief. An anonymous sample LVI report is included in appendix 3.

4.6 Completing the coaching programme with each participant

Each participant completed a coaching programme that consisted of six or seven, 90-minute to two-hour coaching sessions. The difference in number of sessions depended on their availability over the period of the coaching. The length and number of sessions was chosen as being of the same as typical coaching engagements and of sufficient time and session number to make full use of the coaching framework and to measure any outcomes. The coaching sessions were completed face-to-face in the offices of the participants where possible. Where coachees were based overseas, as many sessions as possible were conducted face-to face and the remainder conducted via telephone. There is no indication in the post-programme interviews that the difference in session number or mode of coaching made a major difference to the participant's experience of the coaching or the outcomes.

At the start of the coaching programme I would re-contract with the coachee, using my standard coaching protocols and code of ethics (see appendix 1). The contracting conversation was useful in ensuring the coachee's focus on the coaching and what they wanted to achieve, and marked the end of the research components (interviews, LVI) that had just been completed.

The purpose of the coaching was chosen by the participant as I wanted the coaching to reflect a regular engagement, as well as for the participants to benefit from the coaching programme. In general, the purpose selected by the participants was related in some way to dealing with complexity in their roles, whether they expressed it in those terms or not. For example, being able to influence more effectively across the business, deal with a promotion to a more senior and more complex role or dealing effectively with team dynamics. For each participant the initial purpose of the coaching was identified with the coachee, their manager and in most cases with at least one other stakeholder in the organisation such as an HR contact.

Another influence on the selection of the purpose of the coaching was the LVI survey results. While the primary purpose of the LVI was as a measure for the coaching programme, all of the participants expressed an interest in seeing the results and it was considered ethically appropriate to share the report. The LVI report was debriefed with the participant early in the coaching programme and for some participants the report highlighted areas that they wanted to address through the coaching. For others it reinforced that the purpose already selected by the participant was aligned to other people's perspectives. In other cases, the feedback was considered interesting and useful but didn't necessarily change the coaching purpose.

Each coachee was also provided with a folder to use throughout the programme. The folder contained pages for their session notes, pages for a learning journal, the coach protocols, code of ethics and a section for other materials such as LVI feedback, worksheets for specific interventions or readings. The session notes and learning journal were an element of data collection and this was conveyed to the coachee. As outlined in section 4.6 there were varying levels of use of the folder. Some coachees used it extensively, keeping notes during the sessions and using the learning journal as a reflective process between sessions. Others were less reliable in their use of the folder despite my encouragement to do so. The coaching notes and learning journal were collected from the coachee once the coaching programme was completed.

Another form of data collection was the audio recordings of the sessions. It was considered whether this would have a negative effect on the coaching relationship but there was no evidence of such an effect. None of the participants mentioned the

recording of the sessions as being an issue or as distracting from the coaching and none requested that the session not be recorded.

After each session I typed up some notes and reflections while I listened to the recording. I noted the main topics of conversation, any examples where I felt significant insights or shifts in thinking had been gained and elements of the coaching interaction that seemed particularly effective or ineffective. This information was used for my reflection between sessions, to update the CF and for later data analysis.

A decision was made not to transcribe the coaching sessions as the workload involved was beyond what could be combined with a full-time job. I considered the option of having a research assistant to transcribe the sessions but was concerned about providing access to confidential information and I had contracted with the coachees that only I would listen to the recordings. I found that listening to the recordings several times and making and updating notes were adequate means for me to gather the data needed in order to meet the research objectives. I monitored this through regularly reviewing my research purpose, aims and questions and evaluating whether the data would enable me to answer the research questions.

4.7 Developing and revising the coaching framework

While the coaching framework used in both cohorts was founded on a CF approach, my reflections on the experience of using and piloting this approach with the first cohort led to some adaptations in the way that the CF was developed with cohort two.

In the first cohort, having identified the purpose and commenced information gathering, I used multiple perspectives and theoretical approaches to understand each case and to identify possible approaches. I developed a narrative and hypotheses about the case through the lens of multiple perspectives and by applying different relevant theories. In effect, this was a top-down approach to CF. A top-down approach develops hypotheses based on generalisations from a specific theory or theories and applies it to a specific case (Bieling & Kuyken 2003). I used the theories and approaches with which I was familiar and in which I had received training: using the LVI as a diagnostic; goal-focused and solution-focused coaching; cognitive-behavioural coaching; applying constructive-developmental theory, adult learning theory, systems and complexity theory; and positive psychology theory.

Reviewing the different perspectives and hypotheses, I identified potential opportunities to intervene and developed a process for the coaching, implementing specific interventions and attempting to integrate approaches from different perspectives to address multiple factors, where appropriate. For example, using a goal-focused approach to provide focus and motivation for a measurable change combined with ideas from systems theory to consider interactions and how people may respond to the changes in the coachee's behaviour. An example CF developed using this approach is included in appendix 2.

This approach ran the risk of being mix-and-match coaching with interventions from different perspectives that had different ontological and epistemological roots and therefore lacking theoretical coherence. Working through each case from multiple perspectives is also time consuming, although it was a useful way to think through a case in detail from a particular perspective.

Before commencing cohort two, I considered taking a different approach to the construction of the CF. Reviewing the formulation literature and different perspectives such as the problem-solving (Nezu et al. 2004) and the abductive approaches (Vertue & Haig 2008), I realised that I could use a bottom-up formulation process based on CR and systems perspectives. This would provide me with a framework within which to consider factors at the individual psychological or interpersonal level as well as factors at the social realm. Using a bottom-up process facilitated the development of hypotheses based on the interacting factors involved in each case which could then be tested and reviewed in the light of applicable theory or theories. This approach also addressed the issue of theoretical coherence as the formulation and coaching process considers and articulates these interacting factors within the CR framework of realms and domains. This approach helps the coach see the whole system of the coachee in their context, but also facilitates working with individual factors, problems or solutions where appropriate. This approach was adopted for the second cohort of case studies. An example of a CF developed in this way is included in appendix 2.

In all of the programmes, I continued to review and revise the CF as the coaching progressed, updating it with new information and reviewing and revising hypotheses. These changes were reflected in the coaching process, which was adapted as the CF evolved and progress was made.

In addition to revising the approach to developing the CF, I also made some changes to how I conceptualised the overall coaching framework. After reviewing the data from the first cohort with my supervisor, I realised that while my approach was a good illustration of one way of applying and developing individual formulations and using them in coaching it did not constitute a practical framework that represented the whole process of coaching using a CF approach.

In order to develop this framework I made a list of the major activities involved in the coaching approach in a spreadsheet. In grouping these activities, I identified four key themes; considering, discussing or reviewing the purpose of the coaching; developing the CF; coaching interactions and interventions; and reflecting on the case, CF or the coaching. I then spent some time experimenting with how the elements might interact in a coaching system and how the coaching process would flow between the four spaces. My aim was to develop a practical framework that reflected the process of applying a CF approach but avoid an inflexible step-by-step guide that could not adapt to each individual circumstance.

From this activity the PAIR framework was formed to represent the high-level structure of the coaching system: Purpose, Account, Intervene and Reflect. A full description of the framework is included in section 6.5.

4.8 Phase four: data analysis and theory development

The primary aim of the data analysis was to identify the outcomes of the coaching and to establish the primary mechanisms that had the tendency to cause those outcomes in which contexts. This data would be used to review and refine the programme and implementation theories.

To analyse the data, explanatory effects matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were used. These matrices attempted to link the outcomes from the coaching to the possible mechanisms and context factors in one spreadsheet in order to identify patterns. For each coachee a table was set up to display the outcomes identified by each stakeholder or data source:

- Participant
- Manager
- LVI data
- Coach

The data were reviewed and outcomes noted in the column of the appropriate stakeholder, along with the source of the data. This provided a framework to analyse the key themes, identify differences between stakeholder groups and triangulate the data from the different sources.

The next step was to identify the mechanisms that had the tendency to cause those outcomes in the specific context of each coachee and their environment. For each coachee a spreadsheet was established with the following headings.

- Outcome
- Mechanisms
- Context - coach factors
- Context - coachee factors
- Context - structure factors

Analysing the data sources involved reviewing the notes I had made while listening to the coaching sessions, and re-listening to any sections that I felt contained significant interactions. I reviewed the coachee notes, learning journal and my own session notes, underlining and making notations of any factors that related to a possible mechanism.

With the main mechanisms identified I went back through the data for each coachee to identify the context factors associated with each of the mechanisms and outcomes. I also used retroductive and abductive thinking to develop possible context factors at the individual coachee, coach and organisational level based on the data, my experience, as well as theory.

Once I had identified the mechanisms and context factors in each individual case I set up a separate data display spreadsheet in order to perform cross-case analysis to look for patterns in the appearance of the outcomes, mechanisms and context factors across all 12 cases.

With this data I was able to develop a set of CMO configurations that would inform a revised programme and implementation level theory. Where unexpected outcomes or contradictions were identified in the data, context factors were considered in order to develop theories that would explain these outcomes, rather than ignoring the data. For example, there were several cases where the coachee and coach felt that the

coachee had made progress but where the LVI 360° survey did not reflect any changes or where the score reduced.

4.9 Coach development case study

The other objective of this research was to understand the development experience the coach gained through completing the research process. The RE approach was adapted to be used at the individual level. I initially developed some ideas about how and in what ways the research might tend to cause development in the coach/researcher, effectively developing an initial programme theory. Completing the research project was the equivalent to an outcome study and the analysis of the data collected during the research provided the basis for identifying the key outcomes and mechanisms for my development.

The primary data collection method for this element of the research was my learning journal and research diary. This was kept in a document on my laptop and I noted insights, changes in my thinking, challenges, concerns and key learning moments in the diary.

One formal measure was used to establish outcomes for this case study. I completed the SCTi-MAP (Cook-Greuter 2006) in the early stages of the project (March 2012) and again towards the end (February 2014) to establish if my level of leadership maturity had increased. The SCTi-MAP was selected as a reliable measure of constructive-developmental level as well as being an instrument in which I am trained. Given the two-year time frame between testing, it was expected that there would be some developmental shift. According to adult developmental theory, a later stage would give increasing ability to deal with complexity and therefore it could be argued, deal more effectively with complex coaching assignments. Based on both quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the completed 36 sentence stems by a trained scorer, the SCTi-MAP places individuals in one of the identified nine stages of adult maturity (Cook-Greuter 2006).

The data analysis stage involved reviewing the learning journal and coaching reflection notes to identify the key events, outcomes and possible mechanisms of coach development. An explanatory effects matrix was used to map the outcomes to possible mechanisms of development.

This data analysis led to the development of hypotheses in the form of CMO configurations that outline the mechanisms and context factors involved in producing the coach development outcomes. These hypotheses are provided in a table in section 6.6.4.

4.10 Method challenges

The first challenge in implementing research from this perspective is that there is little to draw on in terms of processes, references and guidance for appropriate methods for RE studies. This meant the data collection and analysis processes had to be developed as I progressed through the research and became immersed in the data.

The case studies produced a lot of data as there were approximately 12 hours of coaching per coachee, plus notes, interview data, LVI data and learning journals. There are many variables at work in each case and trying to identify the key mechanisms and context factors was challenging and required me to review the data three or four times, refining down to what seemed the best available explanation.

Collecting the learning journals and coachee notes was problematic as some of the participants didn't keep extensive notes or make much use of the learning journal. If it appeared that this was not a learning method that worked for the participant I made the decision to forego the additional data and therefore, in some cases, the data does not have the same level of triangulation. I decided that not enforcing the use of the learning journal was a more ethical approach that put the coachee's preferences ahead of the research. On balance as a data collection method, the learning journals are not an approach that I would use in future studies as the additional data did not provide much that I had not already collected with other methods. Also it relied on the compliance of the participant to a method that may not suit their learning style.

A number of the coachees were concerned about the results of the second administration of the LVI and the implication for my research if it did not show any positive changes. I handled this by assuring them that it was only one of the measures and as it was not an outcome study but an exploratory and explanatory study the actual results were not the main focus. In all cases, the coachees wanted to know the results of the second LVI study and the results were shared with them by phone or a personal debrief. In some cases the overall versatility score decreased between pre and post-programme results. In most of these cases, there were positive

differences in the areas that had been part of the coaching focus and these were emphasised during the debrief conversation. In all cases the coachees responded positively to the feedback, even if their results had not improved.

4.11 Summary

The RE approach was selected for this project because it provided a methodology that was consistent with my epistemological and ontological perspectives and could be adapted to suit practitioner research in a real-world environment. Despite the complexities of implementing the RE methodology, the approach offered the potential for understanding not only the outcomes of the coaching programme using the PAIR framework, but also what made it effective in the context of the 12 coachees and their organisations.

5 Ethical Considerations

This section outlines and discusses the ethical considerations related to this project. Firstly, the ethical considerations of the research process and the methods that were employed are considered and discussed. The use of 12 case study coachees as part of the research process raised ethical issues that are inherent to executive coaching more broadly. Examples from the coaching case studies are used to illustrate some of the ethical considerations that arise in executive coaching. Finally, the ethical considerations related to the coaching framework developed and piloted in this project are discussed.

Corrie and Lane (2015) have presented three frameworks for consideration of ethical issues as they relate to psychological therapy supervision. These frameworks are equally applicable to research and executive coaching. The first framework is a perspective that draws on externally mandated universal principles, such as codes of conduct, university ethics guidelines or legal frameworks. The second is an internal perspective, or an application of what Carroll and Shaw (2012) have termed ethical maturity. Ethical issues that appear in real-life situations are rarely clear-cut, particularly in complex interactions such as coaching. The principles laid out in codes of conduct can never capture the complexity of how to deal with this issue, with this person, in this context and at this time (Pope & Vasquez 2010). In these situations, what is needed is:

...the reflective, rational, emotional and intuitive capacity to decide actions are right and wrong or good and better, having the resilience and courage to implement these decisions, being accountable for ethical decisions made (publicly or privately), being able to live with the decisions made and integrating the learning into our moral character and future decisions (Carroll & Shaw, 2012, p.129).

Many ethical issues arise within interactions and relationships with others and the third lens through which these issues can be viewed is termed the relational perspective (Corrie & Lane 2015). In many cases, a decision on how to manage complex issues cannot be made alone. Instead they can only be resolved through a process of dialogue that aims to develop a shared understanding and agree a way forward.

Many of the issues that arose in this project were ambiguous and while the code of conduct under which I practice (see appendix 1) provided a foundation for ethical practice, many of the issues encountered required ethical maturity. The majority of these concerns arose as a result of interactions and relationships with the coachees and other stakeholders in the organisation, making the ability to raise and discuss concerns essential to being able to resolve the issues collaboratively.

Ethical considerations become even more complex when considered in a cross-cultural context. Ethical standards are often based on the values and rules of the local culture but values and rules are not universally held across cultures (Law, Ireland & Hussain 2007). Codes of conduct developed in one culture or location need to be applied with consideration to the local social norms. This is further rationale for developing the capacity for considering ethical concerns through internal and relational perspectives.

5.1 Ethical considerations of the research process

Gray (2009) has argued that ethical issues of research fall into four broad categories; ensuring informed consent, avoiding harm to participants, respecting privacy of participants and avoiding deception. The processes and precautions taken to ensure these fundamental ethical standards for research were met are described in section 4. However, there were a number of more complex issues to resolve.

I experienced the complexity of ethical issues in real-world research (Robson 2002) during the process of recruiting the participants in cohort two. As described in section 4.5 my potential participants were nominated by HR contacts, but the decision to participate was left to the coachees. The project briefing document emphasised that coachees were under no obligation to participate. In cohort one all participants confirmed that they were volunteering for the opportunity and I was confident that none were being coerced to participate.

In recruiting the second cohort, I modified the recruitment process to take into consideration the Asian cultural context. As outlined in section 4.5, I spent additional time ensuring that the participants were taking part in the coaching voluntarily.

Despite this extra care I still found myself with a participant (SG8) for whom I had concerns regarding the voluntary nature of his participation. Early in the research

process he showed reluctance to complete the 360° survey, delayed setting meetings with his manager, he postponed meetings at the last minute or was late for appointments. I sensed that the coaching programme was not something to which he was fully committed or for which he had time. I felt that it was likely that he was participating out of a sense of obligation rather than because he believed the coaching would really be of value to him at this time.

I wanted to ensure that I was making a correct assessment of the situation before taking any action. I also needed to consider how to handle this without a 'loss of face' for either the participant or HR leader involved and to be sure that there would be no adverse consequences for SG8 if he chose not to continue. These considerations created some tension with my own need to have a certain number of participants in the study and my concern with the time required to recruit another participant.

On reflection I decided that the best approach was to raise my concerns with SG8 in a way that would not cause him embarrassment by having to say he did not want to be coached. One of the topics of the coaching conversations was time management and prioritisation as SG8 had been assigned to a major project and he was concerned about his ability to cope with the workload. In the second coaching session I took the opportunity to ask him if he felt that at this stage the coaching would be helpful and we explored how he felt about his participation. His reaction was that he knew he would benefit but that he just felt overwhelmed and given a choice he would now withdraw to focus on the new project. However, he was concerned about how rejecting this development opportunity would be perceived by the HR director and his manager. We discussed potential approaches that SG8 could take in raising the issue and he decided that his allocation to the new project provided an avenue for him to discuss his availability for the coaching. We agreed that I would first contact the HR director to alert her that SG8 had raised this issue and to encourage her to contact SG8 to discuss his participation. If necessary, I would make myself available for a three-way conversation. The HR director was very supportive and understood the challenge for SG8. Within a few days of our conversation the HR director confirmed that SG8 had decided to withdraw. She went on to propose an alternative coachee who, having recently been promoted within the HR team, was very keen to participate. The HR leader had wanted to nominate her team member initially but had felt she needed to offer the opportunity to people in the business first. This was an

ideal resolution for all parties that would not have occurred had I not been prepared to raise the issue.

A second significant ethical consideration that arose in the recruitment of the second cohort was that of the psychological wellbeing screening that I had planned to conduct. The understanding and acceptance of such screening in Singapore is still at an early stage and is not widely practised. I was also aware that the research participants would be highly anxious about whether this information would be made available to their organisations. The main risk of not running the screening was that I was less likely to be aware of any pre-existing mental health issues and that therefore, coaching may present risk of harm to the individual.

I discussed the dilemma with several experienced and mature Singaporean coaches, as well as my research supervisor. The coaches confirmed my view that the potential Singaporean coachees would find the screening intimidating, invasive of their privacy and that they would be concerned about the confidentiality of the results. On this basis I decided not to proceed with the screening. Instead, I ensured that I remained alert to any potential mental health issues that presented and ensured that they read and signed my protocols of coaching which include a requirement to inform me if they had received any psychological treatment. Given my level of experience in coaching and the training in identifying mental health issues I had received in my master's degree, I considered that the risk of harm from participating in the coaching would be very low. In my professional practice I do not normally screen coachees in Singapore and therefore this approach is consistent with my regular practice.

Gathering pre and post-programme data raised a further ethical issue, one which is also encountered in executive coaching assignments. In engaging with the organisation and the research participant's manager to gather data, the coachee's manager would ask me for an assessment of the participant's potential or performance, and in one case whether the coachee should be promoted. While it is understandable that a manager would like to use the opportunity to gather a third-party view, providing this input to the manager was not part of the contracted relationship.

I have developed a standard approach to dealing with these requests. I confirm the nature of the coaching relationship as being purely developmental and that as

assessment was not part of the agreed purpose of the engagement, it would be unfair to the coachee to provide any informal judgements. This can be a challenging conversation to navigate as the manager may feel entitled to ask for an opinion and as a coach you want to be seen to add value to the client organisation. I draw them back to using their own judgement and experience of the person as the main source for their decisions. I also encourage them to seek a formal assessment with a qualified practitioner if they would like a professional opinion of the coachee's potential.

5.2 Ethics and executive coaching

The above example is just one of many ethical issues that arise in executive coaching practice. Executive coaching is a complex relationship between coach, coachee and multiple organisational stakeholders and the ethical considerations are similarly complex. As Corrie and Lane (2015) have observed in relation to the supervisory relationship, any attempt to shape another person's performance or behaviour will give rise to ethical issues. Executive coaching often targets changes in a leader's thinking, behaviour or performance. These changes can have broad effects, not only within the organisation, but also more broadly at the level of industries and economies. In complex environments there can be unintended consequences to changes in one factor; in this case the decisions or behaviours of an executive coachee. This further raises the need for an approach to ethical practice that goes beyond a simple application of codes of conduct.

Codes of conduct for coaching generally cover the key areas such as competence, confidentiality, professional conduct and requirement for supervision (see the example in appendix 1). However, complex issues tend to occur at the edge of boundaries and guidelines and require the ongoing development of ethical maturity and the ability to use a relational perspective to resolve ethical dilemmas (Corrie & Lane 2015).

One of the primary boundaries that executive coaches have to navigate is that between a commercial organisation, where the profit motive is of prime importance, and their role as a coach, which brings along with it an ethic of care for their coachee (Peltier 2001). Many topics that are part of coaching engagements skirt this boundary, for example, discussions of work-life balance, restructuring an organisation or managing employee performance. For these types of issues, no single answer is the right answer in all contexts and resolution can only be found through dialogue.

Coaches bring their own values and experiences into the coaching, which will colour how they see these situations. Expressing an opinion of how issues should be addressed is problematic and in a cross-cultural setting even more so, as illustrated by the following example.

During the coaching with cohort two, a number of situations arose that involved managing the performance of employees. For these situations I invoked a set of values and my experience in how I have handled this in my own career, along with knowledge of best-practice according to Western management theory. For most Western managers the process would be to provide feedback and coaching, implement a formal performance management process and if all else fails, the employee's contract would be terminated. This is much less likely to happen in an Asian context, even in a Western multinational. Some indirect feedback might be given and often the problem is addressed by moving the individual into a different role. Sometimes the person is even promoted to a more senior role in a support function in order to save face. There were a number of occasions when I was aware that my values and norms were being challenged by how coachees and their organisations handled these types of situations. In discussions with the coachee, I needed to ensure my questions were supportive and genuine rather than questioning the approach or implying that I thought that there was anything wrong with their thinking. If asked for an opinion, I would give examples of other ways that the situation could be handled and then helped them think through what was appropriate in their context. If a coachee wanted to handle the situation differently to the social norms we would discuss the implications and potential consequences of doing so.

In coaching, as in therapeutic relationships, there are issues arising around the dimensions of power and trust. Without trust, the coaching relationship cannot be effective and building and maintaining trust has to be a core concern throughout the coaching engagement. Even the most senior executive will make themselves vulnerable by sharing their fears, beliefs and thoughts and by doing so the power dynamics can shift. With less senior executives or in cross-cultural coaching this power dynamic may be even more acute. Even if the coach sees themselves as collaborating with the coachee, the coachee may give more status (and therefore power) to the coach.

Pope and Vasquez (2010) point to several other forms of power in a therapeutic relationship that similarly apply to coaching. As coaches, we have the power of knowledge such as our understanding of coaching techniques, psychology, or theories of change. How coaches apply that knowledge requires a level of ethical maturity to ensure that skills and knowledge are used in the service of the coachee. Coachees trust us to be competent and invest in us the power and expectation that we know how to bring about behavioural change. In executive coaching they may also expect us to know how to solve some of the challenges they face, such as that of managing performance discussed above.

Along with the ethical considerations of coaching more broadly, this project raised specific issues relating to the development and use of the PAIR framework in coaching. Firstly, this was a new framework that was developed and piloted with the coachees, which in itself raises an ethical issue; should I trial something with coachees that may affect my competence? In this case, the use of the framework did not impact my ability to coach and in fact supported my effectiveness, but this may not always be the case with trying out new approaches. Coaches bringing new techniques and tools into coaching should do so with appropriate supervision. For example, in applying the constructive-adult development approach, I sought supervision from an expert in this field to ensure that I was applying the approach in a way that was an ethical use of the theory and framework.

Using an approach based on CF raises some other issues of power, trust and care. There is certainly a risk that if the CF is not used sensitively that the CF can be seen as a diagnosis and as a judgement on the coachee. Sharing thoughts as hypotheses rather than as statements and developing the CF in collaboration with the coachee can assist in resolving these issues.

Using a CF approach to coaching can support a coach in ethical practice in several other ways. The use of CF is a way to facilitate the appropriate application of a coach's skills and knowledge, assisting a coach to identify appropriate interventions that are relevant to this coachee in their context.

Ethical maturity as defined above by Carroll and Shaw (2012), also requires that coaches can stand by their decisions, being able to justify privately and publicly their approach to a specific assignment as well as ensuring they learn from their decisions. The CF approach to coaching can provide a sound rationale and make explicit a

coach's decision-making. A CF also provides a means to capturing thinking and learning that can be applied to future coaching engagements.

Reflective processes have a role to play in supporting ethical practice. With reflection, potential ethical issues can be brought to awareness and the options for navigating the dilemma can be considered. In developing and using the PAIR framework, I found that the reflective processes created an opportunity to identify and consider the ethical issues. This was particularly helpful in situations where my values and beliefs were challenged and would support my ability to remain the facilitator of the coachee's thinking, rather than providing input that may not fit with the cultural context.

5.3 Conclusion

Practising executive coaching ethically means going beyond simply following the guidance laid out in codes of conduct. The issues that an executive coach may encounter will often involve the resolving of the tension between various rights and duties and to navigate this complexity effectively requires the development of ethical maturity. It also requires a willingness and ability to raise concerns and collaborate with coachees to resolve the issues that arise. Ethical maturity starts with increased self-awareness and the PAIR framework can support coaches in not only developing effective practice but also in considering ethical dilemmas and supporting the development of sound judgement in regards to ethical practice.

6 Project Findings and Discussion

This section describes the findings resulting from the activities outlined in section 4. Phase one findings articulate the context for the coaching programmes in terms of how executives experience complexity and its effects in the current business environment. A framework of the capabilities executives need in this environment is presented.

A coaching framework based on a CF approach was evaluated and revised throughout the research. The framework contains implicit programme and implementation theories which are also evaluated in the outcome study. These initial theories are outlined in section 6.2.

The findings from the case study coaching programmes are described and include not only the outcomes of the cases studies but also the mechanisms that are associated with those outcomes. There are patterns of outcomes and mechanisms in specific contexts that can be identified in the data and these are used to develop hypotheses about what might make the coaching work for which people and in what contexts.

The coaching framework has evolved as a result of the research and the current version, the PAIR framework, is described in detail in section 6.5 along with the revised programme and implementation theory.

The findings from the case study on my own development are also presented. The findings include the developmental outcomes as well as the mechanisms of that development and relevant enabling context factors.

This section concludes with a discussion of the findings described and the strengths and limitations of the research.

6.1 *Phase One Findings*

Phase one of the project was used to explore the context for the executive coaching programmes in terms of the definitions of complexity and associated terms, and the capabilities that executives require to effectively navigate complexity.

The key aspects of my definition of complexity (see section 1.4) are in evidence in the executive interview data. Executives gave examples of needing to deal with large numbers of heterogeneous variables, which included stakeholders, issues, projects, employees or a combination of those factors. Working to time constraints and needing to handle a large number of variables at speed were also mentioned. Executives articulated that while the factors that make the business environment complex existed before, the expectations of fast turnaround times and short time frames for projects exacerbated the complexity.

Four of the seven executives interviewed in this phase specifically noted that complexity had grown with increased globalisation and interconnectedness. As executives in multinational organisations, the issues that result from operating in multiple countries in different stages of economic development or economic conditions made their roles more complex. For example, a chief information officer (CIO) for an international bank said:

The business environment is hugely exaggerated by the global economic crisis ... I think that is by far the biggest influence. And why that generates complexity is because our local operating businesses are actually pretty healthy but globally our organisation is under a lot of pressure and so we have a dissonance between local conditions and global decision-making.

This quote also reflects how interconnectedness can lead to unintended consequences such as the effects of decisions being made at a global level on the local businesses.

The most common answer to the question about the complexity of their role was people management. Six of the executives mentioned this and it was also a key theme in the HR focus group. Leading a group of individuals who are all interacting, who respond to each other in different and sometimes unexpected ways is another illustration of complexity as defined above.

One participant, the chief marketing officer (CMO), fast-moving-consumer-goods (FMCG) company, summarised this issue as: "... you can't have a perfect world with imperfect people. As long as there's people involved you will have complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty".

Another participant, a CEO of an IT company, said that one of his biggest learnings had been that he had underestimated the complexity of managing very senior people;

the different leadership styles needed for each person, the politics between members of the leadership team and the challenges of integrating new people into the team.

Another factor mentioned by two of the interviewees was the increased need to collaborate; another form of interconnectedness between both people and tasks. With many processes or projects spanning organisations, executives find that the boundaries between roles are less clear and that people are working on similar or the same issue but from different perspectives. This means that there is an increased need to collaborate to ensure that effort is not being duplicated or solutions that fix a problem in one part of the business do not cause unintended consequences in another area.

The interview data also provides examples of how executives experience volatility, uncertainty and ambiguity.

A business development director's experience of this in his industry (engineering consulting) was described as:

You've been strategic, you've made the hard decisions, you've implemented them and then the banana skins appear, you know? The chain reactions are often complex and completely random.

The executives also recognised that they were operating in an environment containing a lot of uncertainty. As one CEO summarised, "you won't know all the answers because you can't know all the answers".

The business development director gave a good example of how this uncertainty is felt in his engineering consulting business:

... the private side of our business, particularly property, is really uncertain because we don't know what's going to happen and when it's going to happen. In times of wealth and plenty you can sort of guarantee that if a developer has an idea and a funder, it will happen. But now it's not the case, you might get planning, you might get funding, but something could change it very quickly, so there's lots of uncertainties in that. And when you go back to the global scene as well, with concern over sovereign debt and if Greece goes down, what does that mean to Spain and perhaps Portugal? What does that do to the euro zone and what will that do to the pound? We're a British company. There's a lot of uncertainty there, which is affecting our share price, which is putting a lot of pressure on Australia to deliver an outcome. So it all goes round; it's all interconnected.

An example of dealing with the ambiguity of multiple perspectives was given by a senior executive in a large insurance company:

What the customer wants may not be what the government wants or what your team wants to do. So you've got to balance all those things; and at a fast pace.

The interview data illustrate how executives experience complexity and the resulting conditions. Although the context for each coaching programme is different these examples identify the types of challenges that executives currently experience.

6.1.1 Executives' views of required capabilities

The executives were also asked what capabilities they believed they needed to effectively navigate complexity. The following key themes were identified in the interview data.

Six of the executives used terms such as adaptability, nimbleness, agility, flexibility or versatility in relation to the capabilities needed. Several mentioned the need to flex leadership style depending on the situation and audience; moving from command and control or a directive style to one of influence or empowerment. For example, the CMO of an FMCG company said:

You've got to have all the tools in the tool kit. The challenge is to know when to use which and by how much. My initial thought was to say you need to listen, but you need to be able to do both. You need to tell people what to do sometimes as well.

The other way that the executives thought adaptability or nimbleness was required was in responding to changes in the market or broader economic situation. Several talked about the need to be able to adapt to changes or be prepared to shift direction, for example the CEO of an IT company said:

We were brought up in an industrial era with very clear views of what you want to take to market, how you organised your teams...clarity of direction. You set the direction, never changed; that was your credibility as a leader. The whole thing is under question now.... You need to be able to adapt and change and even at times be bold enough to change your direction and vision and say it's not right. So it takes a different kind of leader to do that.

The theme of agility was also mentioned in the HR discussion group. One HR executive summarised this as:

Because things are so lean at the moment you need somebody who can think up there (holding hand up high) as well as just roll up the sleeves and just do and just switch from one to the other constantly and re-prioritise.

The concept of having the right people and the ability to build a strong team to support you was the second most common theme with five executives as well as the HR participants mentioning this factor. This included having diverse and complementary skills in the team, and having a capable team that can be relied on to deliver. This was summarised by the CIO of an international bank:

It's generating a group of people that work for them that deliver all the things that need to get delivered. It's not possible... I thought that I was busy before... I just feel that I'm astoundingly busy now and it would not be possible for me to do all of the things that I'm responsible for without having high, high degrees of confidence in the people that are reporting to me for the elements of my responsibility.

The HR executives also considered having a strong team as important, particularly having a good mix of skills in the team that complement the leader's strengths as one HR director said:

It's having self-awareness and surrounding themselves with people who have complementary skills and attributes. I don't know if they need to have agility but if you don't have it, be aware of it

In addition to these complementary aspects of the team, the CEO of the IT company also felt that you needed people in your team that were prepared to challenge you:

You want to empower your people to challenge you. If you think about it, if people don't challenge you then you'll go down the road that you're always known to go down. So the team you build around you is important as well. I don't think you have the traditional team that you had before. You need a team that can challenge you and bring you some of the customer insights. And the team themselves [*sic*] needs to be flexible and nimble with customer insights.

These comments point to a range of people management capabilities that executives would need such as being able to recruit and manage a wide range of people, and develop talent.

The CIO of an international bank explained the importance of these people management capabilities:

So you've got to spend time to understand their personality, understand what drives them, and understand what their motivations are, what they're good at and what they're bad at, how they work together. The complexities of that interpersonal domain is just.... I can't stress how important that is.

The third most common theme was that of being able to take broader perspectives on situations, whether that meant looking at an issue in the context of the greater good of the organisation or broader community, or being able to step above the day-

to-day activity and take a more strategic viewpoint. For example, one executive described needing to rise above the noise and be strategic. The IT company CEO reflects that taking the perspective of the greater good for the whole organisation might mean giving up control:

Control is another thing; you should be willing to give things up, even when it impacts you. You need to think beyond that and see what's for the greater good, and step back. We are all human, we all have egos, so how do you manage that?

The senior insurance executive said:

So strategic thinking; I think that is critical. You do need to be able to see the big picture and translate that to some extent. The expectation that you're going to evolve and you're always thinking ahead is really important, particularly in this world.

Another common theme was that of communication effectiveness. Three of the executives specifically mentioned listening, two mentioned asking the right questions, three talked about the importance of face-to-face interactions and two talked about authentic communication. The CMO of an IT company explained:

... we talk about good leaders being good communicators but what do we mean by that? So is it about being a great orator? Is it about being a great writer? Is it about being able to mount cogent arguments to the right people at the right time? It's probably a combination of all of those but it's also the need to use the ears and our mouth in the proportion to which they have been given to us, which does not come very naturally to you when you get further up the food chain, and it's not something I'm particularly good at frankly. But that whole active listening and knowing how to ask the right questions.... and being able to dig down to the appropriate level to get the granular answer that you require, that seems to be becoming increasingly important to us when we are being bombarded by lots of disparate pieces of information.

The need for resilience was mentioned by three of the executives and the HR discussion group. This could mean managing people through constant change or having personal resilience and persistence as illustrated by the head of strategy at an international bank:

The other thing that's important is resilience. To be able to cope with large periods of uncertainty and to be able to be persistent in the face of complexity. How do you just continue to eat away at this until the solution becomes apparent? Determination and persistence. With every iteration there are fewer easy answers; there's difficult questions with difficult answers.

The ability to learn or learning agility was also mentioned by three of the executives. Executives also talked about staying curious and being hungry for information as

being important, but also knowing what information was important. The IT company CEO gave this example:

...because we're bombarded with information, trying to sieve, find and consume the right information, yet don't allow that to overwhelm you. Keeping that hunger is key critical. That's a technique that we need to really develop. Learning agility is one thing, but learning the right things, making sure that you sieve the things that you don't want.

In a similar vein three executives also mentioned the need to experiment or make decisions based on limited information and to test the ideas out. For example the senior insurance executive said:

...in order to leap-frog the competitors at the moment you've really got to say I'm prepared to take a chance on something and not get it perfect and trial it.

The head of strategy for an international bank said in relation to having made a decision that didn't get the desired outcomes:

You have at least made a decision and gone one way even if you have discovered you need to change course. At least you know more, and you know more not because things have changed but as a result of the decision.

Relationships, networks and influence were also mentioned by three of the executives. These executives considered that the need to collaborate, have a wide network for information and the ability to influence broadly as important. The head of strategy for the international bank stated:

You have these allegiances and a network of people you can get information from to read the tea leaves, but also to get things done in a complex and ambiguous environment, you're never going to know the answer to everything.

6.1.2 Coaches' perspectives

The coaches had similar perspectives on complexity and the capabilities executives required. They mentioned the speed and number of initiatives that leaders were expected to implement. They also talked about the murkiness, lack of clarity and high levels of uncertainty in organisations as they respond to the volatility of external markets. They recognised the competing tensions that leaders were constantly trying to balance, such as creating and executing strategy at the same time as dealing with day-to-day operational issues. At a personal level, one coach reflected that, "...the true complexity comes from having to give direction and certainty to their people when they themselves don't have any certainty".

One theme mentioned by three of the four coaches that was not picked up by the executives, was what one coach termed walk-on-water syndrome. This referred to

the expectations placed on leaders in terms of what was considered a good leader. Leadership theories abound and leaders are now left wondering which style to adopt today to meet the expectations of the organisation and their people.

At the interpersonal level, many similar capabilities were identified by the coaches as by the executives, such as flexibility and adaptability, which was identified by all four of the coaches. Sophisticated communication skills, the ability to effectively manage interactions, analytical skills, seeing patterns and creating taxonomies were identified as important capabilities.

At the intrapersonal level, three out of the four coaches identified managing anxiety as being important. Three coaches also talked about confidence and self-efficacy; confident while not having all the answers, confident in the face of uncertainty and confidence in not being right and being comfortable with that. Learning orientation and openness to new ideas and experiences, along with high levels of self-awareness and awareness of others were also nominated as important.

Two additional insights were shared that are worth noting. Firstly, one coach, a psychologist, observed that many of those successful leaders who had quickly risen through the ranks are driven by high levels of self-doubt:

They appear very self-confident but underneath is a gnawing sense of self-doubt that makes them get up in the morning and prove themselves. What was a driving force as they rise through the ranks can become a significant de-railer as they enter a more complex role where just trying harder and striving more is not the answer.

The second insight came from another coach who had recently completed a number of assignments with a large Australian financial services organisation. Her observation was that leaders who did display some of the capabilities identified, such as seeing things from different perspectives and challenging the status quo, were seen as 'weird' by the organisation and in fact, were often shut down for not conforming. The organisational system saw this behaviour as a threat and therefore they were forced to conform. This emphasises the issue of understanding the broader system because encouraging someone to stand out from the crowd and implement new behaviours in an unsupportive organisational climate could be a risky strategy for the executive.

Along with the data from the executive interviews, the coaches' answers provide useful illustration and support for the theoretical perspective of the literature. They indicate that the capabilities are not just about changing behaviours but that the intrapersonal elements also need to be considered along with the broader environmental factors. Adapting to the complexity of their specific context requires not only changes in behaviour but changes in how they see themselves as leaders and a nuanced understanding of the situation in which they find themselves.

6.1.3 The Navigator framework

As described in section three, the Navigator framework is a conceptual framework that identifies the capabilities, traits and states that may assist a leader in more effectively navigating complexity. This is a distinct framework from the coaching framework and is a secondary outcome from the project. Where the Navigator framework identifies the capabilities needed to be effective in complex environments, the PAIR framework is an approach to coaching that facilitates the development of these capabilities.

In the Navigator framework, the themes from the literature and interviews with executives are organised into a framework based on a critical realist perspective (see table 6). Capabilities are organised into the two realms of social and intrapersonal elements as well as the three domains; empirical, actual and deep. Elements are conceptualised as interacting with each other and across other domains and realms to form a web of interacting factors that increase or decrease an executive's ability to navigate complexity. The framework also includes elements from the wider context with which these leader and leadership capabilities may also interact.

Influences may move in many directions rather than being linear. For example, experiences of trying out new behaviours may change mindsets and motivations at the intrapersonal deep level, which in turn would influence future behaviour. Likewise the environmental deep elements interact not only with other domains in the social realm but also in the intrapersonal realm. For example, cultural norms would affect what behaviour is expected, and beliefs about what leadership means. Another example would be a leader who moves to a new and challenging role may experience a temporary decrease in confidence due to the new environment.

	Social Realm	Intrapersonal Realm
Empirical domain – events observed or experienced	<p>Matches behaviour to situation.</p> <p>Uses collaborative interaction.</p> <p>Influences and persuades.</p> <p>Delegates, supports and nurtures others.</p> <p>Challenges status quo, creates conflict and nurtures dissent.</p> <p>Engages with multiple diverse groups.</p> <p>Widens and deepens conversations.</p> <p>Brings assumptions, beliefs, reasoning and data to the surface to create generative dialogue.</p> <p>Fosters a culture of learning and facilitates learning in others.</p> <p>Uses informal and formal company structures.</p> <p>Encourages and participates in social networks.</p> <p>Manages anxiety in others.</p>	<p>Can demonstrate a range of leadership behaviours.</p> <p>Knowledge of different leadership styles and approaches.</p> <p>Demonstrates situational awareness.</p> <p>Considers a wide range of information, both technical and relational aspects, in making decisions.</p> <p>Consciously takes different perspectives.</p> <p>Observes and experiences how mental filters, values, motivations and emotions drive their behaviour.</p> <p>Can act without certainty of what the outcome will be.</p>
Actual domain – events may or may not be experienced	<p><i>Events that happen in organisations that are not experienced by the executive.</i></p> <p><i>Other peoples' behaviours in response to deep mechanisms.</i></p> <p><i>Others' previous experiences and assumptions.</i></p> <p><i>Decisions made in absence of executive.</i></p>	<p>Awareness of mental filters, perspectives, motivations, values and life experiences.</p> <p>Aware of and accepts that there are different ways of seeing the world.</p> <p>Notices anxiety in self.</p> <p>Optimistic thinking style.</p> <p>Believes in self and their ability to succeed.</p>
Deep domain – underlying mechanisms and structures	<p><i>Company culture.</i></p> <p><i>Industry, professional structures.</i></p> <p><i>Concepts of leadership.</i></p> <p><i>Informal networks of relationships.</i></p> <p><i>Formal/informal power structures.</i></p> <p><i>Company/country/team cultural norms.</i></p> <p><i>Social structures.</i></p> <p><i>Intergroup dynamics.</i></p>	<p>High openness and low neuroticism personality traits.</p> <p>Open to learning and experimentation.</p> <p>High levels of resilience, optimism.</p> <p>Post-conventional action-logic.</p> <p>Motivated to persist, learn and experiment.</p> <p>Tolerant of ambiguity.</p>

Table 6 Navigator framework

At the intrapersonal level there are a number of factors that would support the ability of the leader to enact the behaviours and approaches in the social realm. For example, being able to read the situation is a precursor to being able to adopt the

appropriate behaviour. Changing their behaviour to suit the environment may require acting in a way that is counter to their normal style, which requires an understanding of their current perspectives and how they drive their current leadership approaches.

Understanding the context for each leader is also important. Contextual factors may include the culture of the organisation, national culture, societal expectations of leaders and leadership, the individual's relationships with others and how the individual is perceived. At a wider level, the environment would include factors such as the maturity of the industry and industry trends, competitive landscape, and broader economic and political elements. These are not generally under the control of the executive. However, they may support or hinder the executive's ability to navigate complex scenarios. As these elements are likely to be different for each individual and their specific contexts, they are included as elements that would need to be considered but not every element would necessarily be applicable in every case and so are shown in italics in table 6.

6.1.4 Coach capability to deal with complexity

The task of developing leaders requires that consideration is given to the many interacting factors that may support or hinder the individual's capacity to navigate the complexity of their specific environment. This makes this type of executive coaching assignment in itself complex. Therefore, not only does the coaching framework used need to match the complexity of the task, but the coach needs the capability to operate effectively in this environment.

While the Navigator framework was developed to consider executives' leadership capabilities, it can also be a useful framework to consider the capabilities that coaches need in order to work with more complex cases. Many of these capabilities are highly applicable to executive coaching such as the need for versatility, the need to focus on interactions, ability to create the conditions for creativity and solutions to emerge, as well as the intrapersonal factors of self-knowledge, being able to deal with ambiguity and having situational awareness. Coaches also need to be aware of the environmental factors that are at play for them, not just for their coachees.

6.2 Phase Two: Coaching Framework and Programme Theory

Given the complexity of executive coaching assignments in the context described above, it is argued that a coaching framework that uses CF provides the flexible but robust approach needed to take into account the many interacting factors involved in

complex coaching cases as well as supporting the coach in their own ability to navigate complexity.

As described in section 4.5, I piloted an approach with cohort one that applied the PPP framework to each individual case as a way of developing individual formulations. This formed the initial coaching framework.

6.2.1 Programme and implementation theories

This section outlines the initial theories that were developed in phase two of the research project. At a high level of abstraction is the overall programme theory:

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
1	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	CF approach used by an experienced and trained coach to design a coaching programme to meet the individual's needs.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Coaching purpose met.

Table 7 Programme theory

Specific CMO configurations represent the detail of how the coaching approach is applied and form the initial implementation theory.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
2	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	An agreed purpose for the coaching.	Provides a focus and boundaries for the coaching assignment. Coaching purpose met.
3	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	Engagement with stakeholders provides understanding of the broader context, aligns purpose across stakeholders, engages stakeholders to support coachee.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
4	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	Coach awareness of their perspectives and the choices that lead from it enables coach to decide if their perspective is suited to the coaching purpose and the needs of the coachee.	Coaching adapted to meet needs of coachee. Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased leadership effectiveness and ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.
5	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	CF that considers multiple perspectives provides multiple possibilities for change.	Coaching adapted to meet needs of coachee. Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.
6	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	A CF that considers the coachee's perspective enables a coaching programme that meets the coachee's world view.	Coaching adapted to meet needs of coachee. Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.
7	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	Hypotheses from the CF provide a framework for the coach and coachee to explore and experiment with new perspectives and approaches.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.
8	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	Coaching process consistent with purpose and perspectives provides a coherent framework for the coachee to explore opportunities for change, test hypotheses and implement interventions.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
9	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	Specific interventions in which the coach is skilled which are tailored to each coachee's case create conditions for change.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.

Table 8 Initial implementation theory

These theories form the basis for understanding not only if a CF approach is effective but also, what are some of the mechanisms of effective coaching in the context of complex assignments.

6.2.2 Phase Three: Findings from Coaching Outcome Studies

This section outlines the findings from coaching programmes with 12 executives in two cohorts. For each cohort, a summary of the context in terms of the individual and their current situation is outlined. This is followed by a summary of the outcomes for each of the coaching cases. To protect the privacy of the participants and confidentiality of the coaching, a coding system has been used to represent each participant. Any reference to industry, gender or age has been removed. Some detail related to the participants' contexts has been included as it is required for the research. Where 'he' or 'she' is used when referring to the participants it should not be considered to represent the actual gender and is included for ease of reading only.

6.2.3 Cohort one contexts

Cohort one comprised five executives in Australian organisations and all were based in Sydney. The participants were diverse with different levels of experience, ages, industries, levels of seniority, levels of complexity and varied challenges. This diversity provided a good testing ground for the flexibility of the CF approach. The table below provides a brief description of the participants, some of the context factors and the agreed coaching purpose.

Participant	Context information
AU1	<p>Australian, general manager, reporting to CEO. Newly appointed to an acting GM role, but with 15 years at the company. Limited formal management training and few formal people management processes in place. Highly supportive CEO actively engaged with coaching programme. CEO new and driving a cultural change in the organisation. New HR GM introducing best-practice HR processes.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Improving performance as a GM, successfully leading major projects and by the end of 2012 that there is no question that AU1 should be appointed permanently as a GM.</p>
AU2	<p>Australian, senior project manager with 5 years at current company. Newly appointed to run a major complex project. Identified as high-potential and attended formal leadership programme. Manager supportive of coaching and has provided feedback on potential career de-railers.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Performing effectively in this major project role, which will require improved interpersonal skills such as influencing. Also to receive feedback and identify other development areas.</p>
AU3	<p>Australian, GM Operations. In first 12 months of a new role; previously GM of IT Operations. Company investing in coaching and leadership programmes. Manager is passively supportive of the coaching programme. AU3 had serious health concern mid-point through the coaching but chose to continue with the programme. AU 3 also attended a leadership programme.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: To increase confidence and effectiveness in leading a creative, high-performing team that is seen as a partner to the business.</p>
AU4	<p>Spanish, senior manager, 2 years tenure in current role, 10 years in functional field. Highly regarded for technical capability and knowledge but concerns were flagged by HR and manager about some significant behavioural de-railers. Manager supportive and actively involved in the development process. Stakeholders see AU4's style as a major barrier to future promotion opportunities.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Address feedback concerns regarding interpersonal skills and influencing style in order to be considered for more strategic role.</p>

Participant	Context information
AU5	<p>Canadian, head of function with 8 years in current role. Recognised by the industry as an expert in their field. Change of manager during programme. New manager was actively supportive, providing feedback and creating opportunities for AU5. Organisation previously made little investment in leadership development.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Receiving feedback and understanding development needs, particularly in relation to empowering, delegating and developing team.</p>

Table 9 Cohort one contexts and coaching purposes

The participants and their managers were asked to define complexity and the complexity in the participant's role to capture the context in which the coaching programmes would be implemented. The key themes that appeared in this data were consistent with the themes identified by the executives interviewed in phase one.

For the participants, a key element of complexity was managing all the moving parts of their roles such as managing multiple stakeholders, intermingled co-dependent projects, or problems that had many different elements and potential solutions. For example, AU1 talked about all the projects that he and his team were managing:

Now that is challenging as they are all intertwined with other parts of the organisation and some are dependent on others.

A second issue that three of the participants mentioned was what AU2 termed the 'people complexity' of managing the competing priorities of different stakeholders and trying to negotiate solutions that would meet everyone's needs.

Three of the participants also identified complexity in dealing with issues or problems that had no single right answer or there were multiple ways to approach the issue. For example, AU4 talked about a recent project that he had been involved in:

Recently I've been involved putting together an investment strategy for one of our products and the complexity in this project lies in the many different approaches that you could take in order to achieve the ultimate goal.

AU2 also talked about the project that he managed which had many issues and involved many people:

The most complex part of this role is providing order to the chaos. There are 60 issues we have to fix up and multiple solutions to those issues and multiple stakeholders that require reporting and engagement.

The most senior and experienced participant (AU5) had a different perspective on how he experienced complexity and identified the issue of having to switch between the strategic and operational aspects of his role and the versatility that this required which he described:

The complexity of strategically thinking about [*my function*], where it's going and how you do it along with mixing the delivery of day-to-day outcomes that are required. So I'm finding it quite complex in terms of running strategic planning sessions, looking at objectives over a 12-month period at the same time managing cost management day-by-day, the delivery of [*my function*], dealing with incidents and responding to the immediate. So that becomes quite complex because you have to jump from an operational mindset and a reactive approach through to having a dialogue with someone on their opinions about [*my function*] in the longer term Then you have to switch that off in your mind. (Italics indicate where specific identifying information was removed).

AU5 also specifically cited the sheer volume as a contributing factor to the complexity of his role:

The other element of complexity is created by volume. The volume of work these days is huge and that's facilitated by the easy communication tools that we all have so we have this huge workload and people can add to that workload at will through email.

6.2.4 Cohort one outcomes

All of the participants stated that they found the coaching programme useful and they all identified outcomes that indicated that the agreed purpose had been achieved.

Three of the participants achieved promotion or confirmation of their acting role either towards the end of the coaching programme or soon after it was completed. AU1 was confirmed in his position as GM after 12 months in an acting capacity and AU4 was offered three roles within his organisation, some at two levels above his current role. AU5 was given a much broader operational leadership role that spanned multiple functions after acting in his manager's role (head of operations) for a 3-month period during the coaching. In all three cases, the participants and their managers identified that the changes that they had made during the coaching programme contributed to the participants being offered these opportunities.

Two participants identified significant achievements in their work that they believed the coaching had assisted them in attaining. Both AU1 and AU2 received wide recognition for how they had handled very challenging and complex projects.

There were mixed results in the LVI scores. For two of the participants there were positive changes in the overall versatility scores, indicating greater versatility of leadership behaviours, and in the specific behavioural areas that had been a focus for the coaching. For three out of the five there were negative changes in the overall LVI scores indicating less overall leadership versatility, but despite this they were recognised as being more effective as leaders as indicated by the overall effectiveness rating. These mixed results are discussed further in section 6.2.7. Table 10 below, summarises the key outcomes for each of the participants.

Participant	Outcomes
AU1	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling and acting more confidently as a GM and in dealing with the executive committee and board. • Improved people management practices and processes. • Complex organisational change project successfully implemented. • Taking on significant challenge such as opening new offices in Canberra and Perth even though board were initially sceptical. • Confirmed permanent appointment to GM role. <p>Other outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness of a need to be 'right', to have the answers, and how his behaviours drove team behaviour. • Leading and managing in a more mindful way; not just reacting and following previous organisational leadership culture and style. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility reduced from 79% to 77% indicating less balance between the leadership dimensions. • Slight improvement in perceived effectiveness rating, 7.46 to 7.5, which indicates being seen as slightly more effective as a leader. • Improved score in specific behavioural pair: receptive to pushback -1.23 to -0.77, and defends position +0.92 to +0.31. This result recognises improvement in being less dogmatic and being more open to other people's ideas, a focus of the coaching.

Participant	Outcomes
AU2	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully delivered complex major project. • Recognised by manager as having improved ability to influence and manage stakeholders. • Recognised by manager as having improved people management capability. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVI score decreased from 90% to 89%, indicating slightly less balance across the leadership dimensions. • An improvement in the F-E versatility score from 87% to 89% indicates more balance between forceful and enabling styles, with specific behaviours improved: empowers, -1 to 0.67, and steps in when problems arise +0.9 to +0.5. This indicates the growth of a more enabling style to balance a tendency to be overly directive. • Leadership effectiveness score increased from 8.4 to 8.75 indicating that he was recognised as being more effective as a leader than at the start of the coaching.
AU3	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication becoming more purposeful and precise. • More future focused, developing a vision for her team, succession planning and development plans in place. • More effective team meetings and one-on-ones – structured and purposeful. • Feels more confident in her interactions with peers and senior leaders, although peer ratings in LVI had decreased indicating that they saw her being too assertive and pushing her agenda too forcefully. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility score decreased from 81% to 78% indicating less balance between the leadership dimensions. • Some specific behaviours improved: doing slightly more empowers, -1 to -0.67 and less stepping in when problems arise +0.9 to +0.5, showing the development of a more enabling style. • Overall effectiveness rating decreased from 7.31 to 7.21 indicating that AU3 was seen as slightly less effective as a leader.

Participant	Outcomes
AU4	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More collaborative, less dogmatic and able to step back and let others talk and contribute. • More empowering and improved delegation. • Received three internal job offers and took a global role based in US. <p>Other outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater self-awareness and awareness of perspectives and beliefs that were not previously visible to him. • Increased reflective capacity and practice – consistent weekly reflection. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall LVI score improved from 78% to 84%. • F-E dimension improved from 79% to 88% indicating a substantial shift away from previous forceful behaviours and adopting more enabling behaviours. • S-O dimension improved from 77% to 80%, indicating a more appropriate balance between strategic activities and operational focus. • Leadership effectiveness score increased from 7.19 to 7.63 indicating that others saw his leadership as more effective post-coaching.
AU5	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised improved willingness and ability to delegate. <p>Other outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to step into his manager's role in an acting capacity. • Successfully transitioned to managing team members who were previously peers and in areas that he has no technical expertise. • Appointed into a broader role in final re-structure. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall LVI score improved from 82% to 87% indicating an ability to apply a broader range of leadership behaviours. • F-E dimension improved from 80% to 84% indicating a more appropriate balance between enabling and forceful leadership styles. • Specific behaviours improved: step in when problems arise, +0.79 to +0.27 and trust people to handle problems -0.5 to -0.27, behaviours which were a focus of the coaching. • S-O dimension improved from 83% to 89% indicating a better balance between strategic and operational leadership. • Leadership effectiveness score decreased from 8.14 to 7.74 indicating that he was perceived as being less effective as a leader.

Table 10 Cohort one outcomes

6.2.5 Cohort two contexts

The second cohort of participants were based in South East Asia and there was a diverse mix of participants by industry, age and cultural background. Table 11 provides information on the cohort two coachees, their context and the agreed coaching purpose.

Participant	Context information
SG1	<p>Irish, regional senior VP Asia Pacific with 2 years in current role, and 8 years in company. With changes in company structure and having recently returned from leave, SG1 was struggling to reconcile family duties with previous high achievement and long working hours. Manager supportive and actively engaged in process, providing ongoing feedback. Company culture tough, hard-driving and masculine.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Exploring SG1's motivations and drivers for current and future roles, receive feedback and address any specific development issues. Key stakeholder would like to see SG1 drive her team a little harder, getting results through others and influencing peers more effectively.</p>
SG2	<p>Singaporean, recently appointed to run a department for Singaporean company. Transitioning to the new role as the coaching started. Facing many complex issues in taking over a poorly managed, complacent team. Traditional hierarchical leadership culture. Manager actively supportive, engaged in coaching process.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Increase confidence and presence in the new role, helping SG2 make the step up to a leadership role.</p>
SG3	<p>Singaporean, VP for Singaporean company with 8 years in company and 12 months as VP. Inexperienced people manager, with very limited formal management training. Traditional hierarchical leadership culture. Manager passively supportive, little regular interaction and limited insight into development needs and processes.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Stakeholder's view is to increase his leadership effectiveness with team as well as in managing external projects. SG3 interested in addressing feedback.</p>

Participant	Context information
SG4	<p>Singaporean, VP for Singaporean company with 6 years in company and 2 years in current role. High-achieving but blunt and abrasive style with peers a barrier to the next career move. Traditional hierarchical leadership culture. Manager supportive of coaching, keen to help highly valued team member, but lacked skills to provide development himself.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Address specific interpersonal style concerns that stakeholders believe will hold SG4 back from a further promotion; increase ability to influence peers, be seen as less aggressive.</p>
SG5	<p>Singaporean, GM (country manager) for large multinational company. Based in Mongolia and been in this role for 7 years and with company for 11 years. Challenging environment and seeking to move to another role as SG5 felt forgotten in Mongolia. People processes not well established and leadership team capability lacking. New manager appointed during coaching.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Increase confidence, be more assertive and proactive and achieve a new position.</p>
SG6	<p>Malaysian, GM (country manager) for large multinational. Transitioning to new role in Indonesia as the coaching started. With company for 6 years. Very competent GM but facing a bigger and more complex role as well as dealing with complex government relationships and regulations. Some leadership training completed. New manager appointed during coaching.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: Make a successful transition to new role and address any specific feedback.</p>
SG7	<p>Singaporean, regional director for large multinational company. Been in role for 12 months after being promoted two levels, from sole contributor to middle manager role, with a team of 35 people. Totally overwhelmed by the new role, and dealing with several difficult people management issues. Manager supportive but lacks the time to effectively provide the support needed.</p> <p>Agreed purpose: To support SG7 in stepping up to the new role, developing people management capability, more confidence and a more strategic perspective.</p>

Table 11 Cohort two contexts and coaching purposes

As with cohort one, the participants and their managers were asked in a pre-programme interview to describe complexity in their context. The primary theme for cohort two was people complexity, with six out of the seven participants mentioning the complexity of dealing with many people often with competing perspectives. For example, SG3 talks about managing complex construction projects:

Complexity – many parties got involved.... When coming to issues and problems, technical problems are not a problem. They can be overcome. As long as there are human beings, there is complexity. If there are many people involved coming from different backgrounds then there will be complexity involved.

Similarly SG7 works in a complex matrix environment where he has to negotiate with many people to implement regional projects:

I think complexity is really brought about by differences. So when there are too many parties driving different objectives or even driving different objectives in different ways... and the differences in the people involved. So the values, the personality, expectations, knowledge etc. that each of them bring to the situation makes the whole thing very complex.

An element of people complexity that is not mentioned in cohort one but appears in cohort two is that of managing across the region and the differences in culture or stage of economic and social development. For example SG5's manager, a very experienced expat leader, describes the challenges of operating a multinational in Mongolia:

Mongolia is a very young society and Mongolians have a very different perspective on life and business. The life expectancy at the moment is very low – mid-40s to mid-50s. So as a result of that, a year is a long time. And also there is a very clear differentiation between the seasons, and because they come from a nomadic frame of reference up until the last 20 years, people are used to doing different stuff in the summer and in the winter. So that has an impact on how they view careers. So it's a matter of what they have to do for winter. Summer is here, let's go and have a holiday. Don't worry about it. It does not matter if I get drunk and get fired I can always go back to the family and do some sheep shearing. That sort of approach which is completely different from our western or even Asian approach to family, saving, career progression, learning and development.

SG1 talks about the complexity of managing across the region, where each country has different challenges.

It's complex, it's Asia. I have to build a talent strategy for Japan and I have to find people, how do we do that? How do we find those people? Every country has its own set of challenges. So the role itself is certainly complex, what we're trying to achieve with limited resources. You know you have to be creative in what you're doing and try new things.

Two of the participants also mentioned interconnectedness as a factor for complexity. For example, SG6 states:

Complexity to me is where there are many variables, and a lot of interplay within one another. And, there is some form of interdependence within one another.

In this cohort, several of the participants mentioned dealing with uncertainty, for example SG5 talks about having to make decisions without all the information:

Faced with an issue or problem with multiple variables and many of them are where you don't have complete information over of each of the variables and therefore you have to make a decision with incomplete information.

SG1 uses the term ambiguous but what she is describing is uncertainty as defined in this project:

I guess it's situations where you don't have the full control. Obviously ambiguous situations, which is certainly what we're going through in the company as well. It's not as if we know what the end state is. We're on the journey but we don't necessarily know what that end state will be.

6.2.6 Cohort two outcomes

All seven participants stated that they found the coaching useful and the outcomes varied from specific achievements to less tangible outcomes such as increased self-awareness or confidence, which led to shifts in thinking and behaving.

Three of the participants achieved a promotion or were appointed to a new role. SG2 achieved a formal promotion in recognition of her success in taking on the new role and SG5, after 8 years in Mongolia, achieved a new posting. SG1 was given broader responsibility for a larger geographic region.

Four of the participants felt that they had handled specific situations more effectively than they would have done prior to coaching. SG7 took over a team with significant complex people issues that needed to be resolved. SG5 had a very complex people issue involving the Mongolian business partner and an expat employee. He admitted that in the past he would have ignored the situation and hoped that it resolved itself. Instead, he successfully managed to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all parties. SG6 faced several unexpected challenges in taking up his new role and found talking through these situations helpful in clarifying his thinking in how to approach them.

Gaining confidence was another theme, with three of the participants saying that they felt more confident in their roles and in dealing with complex issues. Four of the participants also said that they had more self-awareness, were more aware of triggers for specific behaviours and had gained insight into current mental models, values and motivations.

As with cohort one, there were mixed results with the LVI survey scores. Five of the participants improved their overall leadership versatility score, one remained the same and one decreased. However, in this case all participants were rated as being more effective as leaders. As with cohort one these mixed results are discussed further in section 6.2.7.

Table 12 below summarises the outcomes for each of the participants in cohort two.

Participant	Outcomes
SG1	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More understanding of who she is, her motivations and reconciling her need for achievement with family duties. • Understanding that achievement may now mean something different at this stage. • Understanding what ignites her passion and the effect of the interaction of factors in the environment with personal factors. • Some specific behavioural changes – being less directive, making contact with employees at different levels of the organisation. <p>Other outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given expanded role covering Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East and Africa. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility increased from 86% to 87% indicating a slight improvement in overall leadership versatility. • Improvement in some specific behaviours: gives direction +0.62 to +0.21, defends position +0.85 to 0, which indicates doing less of these more directive leadership behaviours. • Increase in overall effectiveness rating from 7.79 to 7.84 representing that others perceive her overall leadership effectiveness as having improved.

Participant	Outcomes
SG2	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling more confident in thinking and behaving as a leader. • Giving the team more positive feedback. • More assertive in making known her expectations of the team. • Promotion to Associate VP in recognition of her stepping up to the role. • Recognised by direct reports and peers as having accomplished a lot in a difficult situation. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility score increased from 83% to 91% indicating a significant increase in overall leadership versatility. • F-E dimension improved from 82% to 93% indicating a more effective balance between forceful and enabling leadership style. • Increasing forceful leadership behaviours improved the balance on the F-E dimensions, specifically: assertive increased from -0.5 to 0, pushes people hard increased from -1 to -0.5, expects a lot increased from -0.8 to -0.29, direct, tells people when dissatisfied increased from -.89 to -0.17, holds people accountable increased from 0.5 to 0. • Increase in overall effectiveness rating from 7.3 to 7.46 indicating that SG2 is perceived by others as being a more effective leader.

Participant	Outcomes
SG3	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established specific people management processes such as regular one-to-one meetings, a method for tracking projects and issues, establishing clear expectations for his team. More clarity on what is his role and what are others' roles. Carving out time for more strategic thinking and projects that contribute more broadly to the organisation rather than being stuck in the details and firefighting. <p>Other outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater awareness of current mental models, such as his decision-making framework that was previously sub-conscious. Developed understanding of what is required for self-development in terms of motivation, goals and focus. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in overall versatility score from 86% to 88% indicating an increase in overall leadership versatility. F-E dimension 85% to 88% indicating a better balance between forceful and enabling leadership behaviours. S-O dimension increased from 87% to 88% with an increase in more strategic leadership behaviours with specific improved scores in launched change -0.88 to -0.38, innovation -0.42 to -0.12 and future orientation -0.62 to -0.27, reflecting some of his specific initiatives. Increase in overall leadership effectiveness score from 7.75 to 7.87 indicating that SG3 is perceived by others as being a more effective leader post-coaching programme.

Participant	Outcomes
SG4	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding triggers for the behaviours she is trying to change. • More mindful of how she responds and is able to moderate her responses. • Redefining how she sees success/failure; reducing fear of failure; lose the battle to win the war. • Manager and SVP HR recognise her attempts to modify her style. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility score increased from 91% to 93% representing a small increase in overall behavioural versatility. • F-E dimension 90% to 91% indicates a more effective balance between forceful and enabling leadership styles, with specific improvement (decrease) in forceful behaviours that were a focus of the coaching; assertive in making her point improved from +0.56 to +0.38; open to influence improved from -0.56 to -0.25; defends her position decreased from +0.56 to -0.25; direct, tells people when dissatisfied decreased from +.67 to +.12. • S-O dimension from 91% to 96% indicating a better balance between strategic and operational tasks. • Increase in leadership effectiveness score from 8.17 to 8.35, indicating that SG4 is perceived by others as being a more effective leader post-coaching programme.
SG5	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in his confidence as a leader. • Less anxious about handling difficult conversations and saying no to requests. • Increase in motivation to change and belief in his ability to change. • Being more proactive in driving the agenda with senior managers. • Achieved his goal of being appointed to a new role within the company. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility score remained constant 86% indicating that while individual scores may have changed, the overall level of versatility has remained the same. • F-E dimension increased from 82% to 83% which represents a slight improvement (doing more of) in some of the forceful leadership behaviours: decisive increased from -0.5 to -.017; lets people know where he stands increased from -0.75 to -0.5; direct, tells people when dissatisfied increased from -1.1 to -0.67. • Overall effectiveness increased from 7.56 to 7.94 indicating that SG5 is perceived by others as being a more effective leader post-coaching programme.

Participant	Outcomes
SG6	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating solutions, refining ideas and clarifying thinking in relation to specific situations. • Recognition from employees for successful communication of vision and strategy for the company. • Recognition from his manager and his leadership team for successful first 6 months in role. <p>Other outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of mental models and assumptions. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall versatility score improved from 84% to 86% indicating an increase in behavioural versatility. • S-O dimension 83% to 87% indicating a better balance between strategic and operational leadership, with improvement on some specific behaviours: spends time and energy on long-term planning increased from -0.47 to -0.2; thinks strategically increased from -0.13 to 0 (best score possible); aggressive about growth increased from -0.14 to 0; and encourages innovation increased from -0.38 to +0.23 • Leadership effectiveness scale improved from 7.63 to 7.92, indicating that SG6 is perceived by others as being a more effective leader post-coaching.
SG7	<p>Coaching purpose achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling more confident in her ability to perform her role. • Reinforced that she is doing the right things, that she does have the knowledge to manage her role. • More confident in dealing with difficult conversations and people management situations. • Successfully managed several very difficult people issues. • Insight into the different values, experiences and cultural norms that lead to differences in people's reactions and approaches to situations. <p>LVI outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced overall versatility score from 88% to 80% indicating that the overall perceptions of her behavioural versatility have decreased. • However, overall effectiveness rating improved from 6 to 6.5 indicating that she is now perceived as being more effective in her role than prior to the coaching programme.

Table 12 Cohort two outcomes

6.2.7 Outcomes Discussion

The data from the 12 case studies provide evidence to support the initial programme theory that coaching programmes using a CF approach did have the tendency to increase the participants' abilities to navigate complexity. The outcomes indicate that for the majority of the participants, the coaching purpose was achieved and recognised by others. The agreed purpose in the majority of the participants' cases

did relate in some way to dealing with the complexity they were experiencing in their role, such as managing multiple complex projects, stepping up to roles involving complex people management issues or managing multiple stakeholder groups.

There is also evidence that the coaching had the tendency to develop specific capabilities identified in the Navigator framework and that were measured by the LVI survey. Overall versatility as measured by the LVI increased in a total of seven of the 12 participants, eight improved on the forceful-enabling dimension (how they lead) and seven improved on the strategic vs. operational dimension (what they lead). In five of the seven cases where overall versatility improved, there was also an increase in leadership effectiveness scores.

Other Navigator capabilities in the social realm were also improved, including factors that are associated with a collaborative leadership style. In cohort one, both AU4 and AU5 increased their ability to empower and delegate, and AU2 improved his ability to influence. Increased behaviours that encouraged innovation were also identified in SG3 and SG6 in cohort two.

At the intrapersonal level there is evidence of increased self-knowledge such as reported by SG1, SG3, SG4 and SG6 in cohort two. Increased confidence to act in situations of ambiguity also increased in five of the 12 cases and there was some increase in situational awareness such as described by SG4 in understanding the triggers for emotional reactions and considering how others' were feeling.

6.2.8 Complexity of measuring outcomes

Although seven out of the twelve achieved improved LVI scores, there were some contradictions in the scores, such as increased versatility scores but decreased effectiveness and vice versa. These results highlight the challenge of measuring outcomes in a complex environment where there are many elements involved. Interacting factors, not only in the coaching system, but also in the layers of context may activate blocking as well as enabling mechanisms. For example, in the case of AU3 her LVI results were disappointing for her as she felt she had made progress. However, there were a number of context factors that may have blocked the actual behavioural changes being implemented or noticed. AU3 had to deal with a serious illness requiring daily treatment and absences from the office. The stress of this would have had an impact on her ability to make changes as well as keep on top of

her role when she was absent for part of each day. While the respondents may have considered this in their answers, the result is that they still saw her as being less effective despite the efforts she was making. It is possible that without the changes that she did make, she would have been rated less favourably.

In other cases, the expectations of the direct reports and their discomfort with changes in behaviour by their manager could also affect the ratings. There were a number of instances where the direct report ratings decreased although overall versatility score increased and the manager and peers scored the participant more highly after the programme. The direct reports may not like the changes in behaviour, it may be counter to their expectations of the leader or the direct reports may be uncomfortable that the change in a leader's behaviour meant they had to adapt.

In cohort two there are also cultural considerations to consider when using an instrument developed from a Western leadership perspective. Some of the expectations of leaders in Asia would run counter to the implicit theory embedded in the LVI. For example, many employees expect their bosses to know the answers and not to ask the team to solve problems without the leader being actively involved or telling them how to solve the problem.

As the LVI is a 360° instrument there was also the challenge that aspects of the cultural norms in Asia do not support giving direct feedback and therefore some direct reports and peers may be uncomfortable with completing the survey as critically or openly as they could. This may account for the higher average score for overall versatility in cohort two (86%) vs. cohort one (82%).

In the case of the coachees who achieved a promotion, were appointed to new roles or were confirmed in their appointment, there were many context factors involved. For example, the organisation needed to have and provide an appropriate opportunity, the changes of behaviour needed to be positively regarded in that organisational culture, as well as be noticed by those making decisions on promotions.

The complexity of developing leaders and measuring the outcomes makes it difficult to attribute a linear cause and effect relationship between the coaching and the outcomes. Given this complexity, what it is possible to say is that in certain contexts, the coaching programme had the tendency to cause the participants to increase their

capability to navigate complexity resulting in increased effectiveness and that there is a high probability that the coaching was one of the factors involved. This supports the initial programme theory articulated in CMO#1.

6.3 *Identified Mechanisms*

The second aim of this project was to identify the mechanisms involved in bringing about the identified outcomes and associated context factors. Despite the complexity of the coaching interactions and the multiple factors involved in the coaching system there were some key mechanisms that were evident in the data. There may be other mechanisms involved but those described here are those that the coachees identified and that were also identified in my coaching notes or coaching session recordings and reflections.

Eleven mechanisms were identified in the data from cohort one and eleven in cohort two. Five of the mechanisms appeared in both cohorts giving a total of 17 identified mechanisms.

The most common of the mechanisms is the *reflective space* mechanism, which was identified by all participants. This was one of the factors that the coachees felt was most beneficial: having time and space to talk things through, but more than that, to consider things from a different perspective or to analyse situations in more detail. There appears to be a process of hearing themselves say things out loud that makes things become clearer. This effect was often mentioned in a coaching session where a coachee would say 'hearing myself say that out loud now I realise.....' This is well described by SG6:

Having the coach there just forces me to have that reflection time. Having the coach to challenge me on some of the thinking helps to push my thinking a little bit further. Having somebody repeat what I say helps me to reflect a little bit better, making sure I'm not just talking; hearing what I'm saying. So I think that works well for me. I think that turning points, learning moments and insights are when the coach continues to make you reflect more.

SG4 describes this mechanism in a similar way:

It actually sort of forced me to take time to articulate my thoughts because a lot of these things go on, a lot of issues that are going on around me are usually up in my head.....So I think that part really helped because once I say it, sometimes what's in my head when I say it out, sometimes I actually see it a little bit differently.

AU3 also found the reflective space and questioning useful to explore different perspectives:

I think what really worked well, and thinking back on times when little lights came on in my head...what really worked well was when I gave you a situation or talked about a situation and you'd tackle it from a different perspective. So by sort of going through the process and actually... and analysing in a different way it opened up my thinking about how, oh, right I can see that now.

At a more fundamental level the reflective space provides an opportunity to unload the issues and problems the participant is facing, SG3 describes:

...after I put down my stuff, go and meet Louise, I feel more relieved because at least I have somebody to talk to, I have somebody to complain to or feedback my problems or my issues.

A mechanism that contributes to the reflective space was identified by SG2; *probing questions*, which she describes:

I suppose during the coaching sessions there are questions asked, probing questions that made me think about whether certain actions or certain thinking I have, is it good for me as a leader and whether certain thinking or actions is it good for the department if I do or I don't do.

Direct and supportive feedback was a mechanism identified in all five cases in cohort one and in three cases in cohort two. A feedback process was embedded in all the coaching assignments in the form of the LVI and this was mentioned as being a helpful process in a number of cases. For example, AU4 talked about the LVI:

I've changed. Reading that LVI from the team, that the team felt I needed to let them do more and they have never really approached me in that directly and that made me think.

SG1 talked about the LVI and that even though she already knew the areas it still provided focus for her development:

The LVI gave a good insight but I don't think there was anything particularly new, I mean I think I'm pretty much self-aware but it was good reinforcement of what I did know, I guess. And then from there I mean, there was definitely areas to develop of course, which I tried to focus on.

The second form of feedback was based on my own reflection of how I experienced specific behaviours or traits of the coachee and then wondering with the client if others had the same experience. In discussing this with AU3 she says:

...it's not something that you get from other people, they tend to tolerate or make amends for it and perhaps go away unsatisfied. By having someone who is really throwing it back at you is a really valuable, a really valuable learning.

AU2 says something similar:

The coaching worked well because you said this is where you are and I think you need to be here and this is feedback that I'm giving you that you may not hear from others.

SG6 shares how feedback in the sessions was useful:

...where Louise is actually challenging me on my leadership style, areas that she sees, areas that I should be developing and stuff like that.

A *perspective-taking shift* mechanism was identified in two of the cases in cohort one and four in cohort two. This describes a shift in how the coachee made sense of their world, themselves and their relationships with others, which led to significant changes in attitude or behaviour. AU4 gained a greater perspective on his behaviour and how it affects other people and was able to identify a key issue that had been hidden to him before: "You made me question how much of my self-awareness was really there," and later in the interview he talks about the awareness of a core belief that he has now that was not visible to him before:

My issue was that I know more than everyone and I have got to show it... and I feel that I have to show it and that I compete with everyone to show how good I was.

AU1 described a "light-bulb" moment for him that changed how he approached his role:

It was the second session where we were still formulating what I wanted to achieve out of these sessions and as you know I was new to the sessions, I was focused on rolling out [*Project X*] and it was unknown and it was communication. I hadn't communicated the change and so I was very focused on that and we addressed that and that's fine but it was you said...truly is that all you wanted to achieve... and then I said, no I want to leave a legacy... and that was the light-bulb moment where if we consider my tenure here as if it is permanent rather than I've just got some tasks to do for the next 12 months. I think that was a real positive and that really changed my attitude to even conducting myself in the role.

SG4 describes how she now has a perspective on the triggers for some of the reactions and how that has helped her modify her behaviour:

The part about trigger points, I think that really helped. So that helps me in terms of moderating my behaviour because I know what is upsetting me and I can see it and I need to put things in perspective and maybe try to approach it a different way. And possibly also in terms of not being so, sometimes, self-righteous because I tend to see things as "if it's right it's right, you know, what's your problem?"....And by moderating my behaviour, because at the moment I am so whether self-righteous or whether so insistent, sometimes it puts people in a defensive mode and when that happens they totally won't be hearing me.

SG6 discusses how he now has visibility of some mental filters he applies:

I think one of the things was discussing about our view of people, whether we talk about people I trust and people I trust less was a good example of Louise being able to open my thinking a bit more and trying to get to the filters I have and I think that was quite good.

Three of the coachees in both cohorts also recognised that at times there was input from me that was useful, a mechanism of *providing input*. This input took the form of introducing some particular theory or management process, explaining a particular perspective, sharing experiences and examples or providing understanding of psychological concepts. AU4 describes this as:

You knew when to listen to me and you knew when to add value, when to give advice, when to listen and when to add value. And you always had examples that I could relate to and they were very useful. Whether about yourself or other people that you had coached.

SG5 describes how he found this particularly helpful and that it was a good match for his learning style:

I'm the sort that reads a lot, I do need a lot of reference materials. Like I said, when I'm faced with problems I tend to go to experts, I tend to read and I tend to go to the internet a lot. So with Louise, she pointed me to a lot of articles and books. While I didn't read all the books, a lot of the time I couldn't get access to the books but I googled them and I got excerpts from them or the highlights – the dummies versions of these books – and it helped. It really helped a lot.

A specific form of providing input was an important factor for SG7, a *reassurance* mechanism. This means providing support and reassurance to a coachee facing difficult challenges, dealing with new situations or feeling overwhelmed by the situation.

So through the coaching I actually gained some reassurance and confidence ...to hear from someone that I'm not the only one who's facing such issues and people react differently when they are subject to different situations especially crucial ones and it's good to hear from someone, though these may be things that I already know, sometimes you just doubt and you need to hear from someone. Going through all this you get to internalise and you gain, well for me I gain more confidence in addressing the issues and managing the situations.

Related to *providing input* was a mechanism of helping the coachees apply theory. Most of the coachees in cohort one were either experienced managers or had attended leadership or management training programmes. This meant that they often had the raw materials to understand what behavioural changes that they needed to make, although they had not been able to translate this knowledge into specific

actions, a *contextualisation* mechanism. They explained this mechanism as making the theory that they had learned relevant to them, relating it specifically to their situation or illustrating the theory with specific examples as well as simply talking through a concept.

AU2 describes how this worked for him:

...simple phrases that you can pick up in any ten-dollar management book but they are not tangible because they are not contextualised. What's the difference between getting the best coaching book with all the information in it that we have discussed with examples, and coaching? The difference is that there is no interaction there. I could read that book a thousand times and it's still unlikely that... because I can't talk to a book and interact with it. I can understand intellectually what it's talking about but I don't feel it in the same way.

Four out of the five cases in cohort one identified the *positive relationship* as an important factor in the coaching. The elements they described were that they felt they were being really heard, that a trusting relationship had been established and a non-judgmental and supportive environment was created.

For example, AU4 reflected on the effectiveness of listening, "The capacity to really listen and how you do it. I feel like listening is actually helping".

AU2 talked about the trust that was established in the coaching relationship:

Trust – did all of this in a way that didn't make me feel like I couldn't tell you things or that I would listen to what you said, the trust, the power of trust that not only enables me to be open with you but enables me to truly listen to what you're saying, good, bad or indifferent, because I trust what you're saying.

AU3 talks about how she valued my approach with her:

I think your patience in working around my style which might have made other people a bit more impatient because I do have a roundabout way of getting to things.

An element that contributes to developing this positive relationship was *coach credibility*, a mechanism that emerged in four of the cases. These coachees mentioned credibility as being a key factor in them trusting me and the coaching process. Credibility was established through the interactions, and by the coachee feeling that they had learned something from the sessions, specific interventions or the actions that they took as a result.

For example, AU4 reflects on our relationship and how my credibility was built up through sometimes quite confronting conversations:

In a way it was quite confronting... in a way felt....a way of opening up in a way that I've never done, so I thought my esteem for you went up. Because I thought 'she obviously knows way more than I originally thought', which made me have even more faith and made me try out the little things that we talked about and really think about it, which I didn't do in the past.

In four of the cases in cohort two, the participants identified a mechanism of *specific solutions* where we worked through an issue and I facilitated their thinking in coming up with solutions or refining their approach to specific challenges. For example, SG5 talks about how he had to handle a particularly challenging situation that could have derailed a strategic business partnership:

The partners in Mongolia were taking exception to V being there, being employed by [our company] the other partner, and Louise helped to walk me through the entire thing – here's the best way or here's a way to handle the V situation.... That was one that was really helpful and I would have done it a lot differently if she weren't there, because of the coaching.

AU1 also stated this as one of the most positive elements of the coaching:

The benefit of these sessions was that we were able to... I would bring forward an issue that I was working on and just talking through that but like normal counselling... if you tell me what to do and it fails then it's your responsibility, not my responsibility.

Participants identified mechanisms that related to interventions or the coaching process that were specific to their cases. The *goal-focused* mechanism was identified in several cases that were underpinned with a goal-focused, solution-focused (GF-SF) perspective. AU5 found this particularly effective:

I think then establishing some clear goals for the coaching was really important otherwise you're just talking about issues and floundering around trying to..., if you don't have an objective. Setting some clear objectives of the coaching sessions was useful. And the two I picked were spot on.

There were four mechanisms that were related to the coaching process: *action and accountability, homework, learning cycle and timing*. The *action and accountability* mechanism appeared alongside the *goal-focused* mechanism in some cases. In these cases the coaching process was based on a cycle of self-regulation with actions and activities agreed at each session and reviewed in the subsequent sessions. This process was cited by the coachees as keeping them focused on their goals, even if they didn't always complete all the actions. For example AU3 says:

It was good in making me put some pressure and a sense of urgency around some of the stuff that we talked about but I can't complain about it even though I didn't like it. I felt that I had a commitment to go and do something and it was quite difficult at times. It's easy to talk about but more difficult to change things.

A specific form of the *action and accountability* mechanism that several coachees identified was that of inter-session work; the *homework* mechanism, which provided a way of keeping the coaching active between the sessions, even though in some cases they didn't complete the agreed actions. AU2 stated, "Having homework was good even though I didn't do it, but I did think about the fact I hadn't done it and it made me think about what it was".

The *learning cycle* mechanism was also identified in several cases. This was either specific reflection to review what worked, what could be changed and what the coachee learned in trying something new, or was simply reflecting on what they had experienced. This took place in the coaching conversation or as part of learning journal or homework activities. AU1 talks about how this worked for him:

By doing it the way we did it, what's perfect is that I needed to think through the outcomes and it was that sort of approach where you were respectfully challenging me with regards to what had to be done and then checking back in to see how it went, what worked well, what didn't work well. So I think your structure is positive.

At a more practical level, SG3 mentioned how the session *timing* was important to him:

I told Louise that we will be fuelled with motivation after meeting with her but because we only see her once a month, so for the first two weeks after meeting her maybe we are fuelled, have some power, but getting close to the next meeting it kind of wears off already, so we need some refuelling.

Later in the interview he expressed that he would have liked to have more sessions that were closer together as he found it hard to stay focused on his goal between sessions.

SG6, talked about a *coachee-driven agenda* and *coach-driven agenda* as both being useful at different points in the coaching:

I think the timing was good, I think being on the phone rather than face-to-face, and having the agenda set by me actually was good initially to obviously have the level of trust, but then it goes on too long therefore I don't feel I was learning through it. But later part of the process Louise started setting a bit of the agenda for the coaching sessions and I think that helped more.

The 17 mechanisms described above were evident in the data from the case studies with different combinations of mechanisms identified by each participant. While there are some mechanisms that are identified in all or a majority of cases, there are many differences, which provides interesting data to explore in terms of what makes the coaching approach work with which people in what contexts.

6.3.1 *Context factors*

In the coaching system there are complex interactions between factors in the coach, coachee, and the broader context as well as factors of the coaching framework or intervention. At the individual level for both participant and coach these interacting factors include goals, values, personality, habits and defences, history, genetics, physiology, mental models and theories, skills and abilities (Cavanagh 2006). Untangling this complex web of interacting factors is difficult, however in reviewing the data from the 12 case studies it is possible to identify context factors that are associated with the identified mechanisms and outcomes. These patterns are described below and the associated CMO configurations based on the data are articulated.

Common factors across all the coachees were their willingness to participate, along with moderate to high levels of motivation to address development needs and a belief in their ability to change. These are context factors that are likely to play a significant part in many of the mechanisms. The first of which is the *reflective space* that all participants recognised as an important mechanism. Coachees were open to the discussion and prepared to share their thoughts, particularly as the relationship developed.

This mechanism also relied on the ability of the coach to create this space. One of the elements in creating this reflective space was identified by SG2, probing questions. This required that the coachee was open to having their thinking challenged and that the coach was skilled and confident in posing effective questions. These factors are captured in CMO#10 and 11.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
10	Coachee open to coaching and motivated to address development needs. Skilled and confident coach.	A reflective space that opens up possibilities for change.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity.
11	Coachee open to having thinking challenged. Coach skilled in asking effective questions.	Use of probing questions.	Creates changes in perspective that can lead to more effective leadership approaches.

Table 13 CMO configurations 10 and 11

Similarly, the *feedback* mechanism contains context factors for coach and coachee. In the cases where the feedback was mentioned as a mechanism of the coaching, the coachees were eager to receive the feedback, asking to be provided with the LVI feedback before identifying goals or specifically asking for feedback as part of the coaching process. The coach needs to be able and prepared to offer this feedback effectively.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
12	Coachee open to coaching and motivated to address development needs. A coachee open to feedback. Coach able and prepared to provide feedback.	Supportive and direct feedback creates greater self-awareness, creates motivation to change.	Changes in thinking and behaving. Achievement of coaching purpose.

Table 14 CMO configuration 12

In reviewing the data for the *perspective-taking shift* mechanism, several coachee context factors were apparent. In some way or other their current perspective was restricting their options and they were able to articulate the constraints this view was placing on themselves or others. For example, AU4's perspective on having to be the smartest person in the room stopped him from being able to use his team's capability effectively. All the participants were motivated to change behaviours but needed this perspective shift in order to facilitate the behavioural changes. This requires the coach to be able to see not only the coachee's perspective but other potential ways of viewing the issue and have the capability to create the perspective shift.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
13	Coachee's current perspective-restricting options. Coach able to see coachee's and other perspectives. Organisational and society structures that support new perspective.	A shift in perspective opens up possibilities for change.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity.

Table 15 CMO configuration 13

There was an interesting pattern that emerged between the *contextualisation* and *providing input* mechanisms. In most cases, where *providing input* was an identified mechanism, the coachee either had little formal management training, the organisation had not yet invested in significant leadership development initiatives or there was a lack of formal management processes. In contrast, in the case of the *contextualisation* mechanism, the organisations had well established formal management processes, leadership competencies and the participants had received management or leadership development. In addition, the coachees identifying the *contextualisation* mechanism were in their companies' talent pipelines, their line managers actively supported the coaching with feedback and discussions, and the organisational culture supported development. See table 16 below.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
14	Coachee with raw materials in terms of knowledge, experience, training. Coach with relevant experience and knowledge. Organisation provides appropriate management tools and training. Supportive and involved manager.	Contextualise relevant theory to facilitate application.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity.
15	Coachee lacks specific knowledge or experience. Coach with relevant specific knowledge or training. Organisation lacks formal management processes or training.	Provides input in the form of theory, tools or techniques.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity.

Table 16 CMO configurations 14 and 15

The *positive relationship* mechanism was explicitly valued by four of the coachees and this relied on their openness along with the ability of the coach to create this positive space. Part of establishing a relationship of trust was the credibility of the coach. There is an interesting pattern in those that found *coach credibility* to be a key mechanism. These participants were technical experts and were in organisations that valued technical expertise or were in a social culture that valued formal education and experts, such as Singapore.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
16	Coachee open to coaching. Skilled and confident coach.	Positive relationship that enables open dialogue and trust creates an environment for learning and change.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity.
17	Sceptical, technical coachee. Culture that values technical expertise. Confident and experienced coach.	Establishing coach credibility creates an environment for learning and change.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity.

Table 17 CMO configurations 16 and 17

In identifying *specific solutions* mechanism the coachees were often facing a highly complex situation and were willing to share their thoughts and concerns. This mechanism also relied on the coach being able to facilitate the conversation.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
18	Coachee willing to share complex and challenging situations and open to explore and experiment. Coach who can facilitate exploration of possible solutions in structure dialogue. Environment that presents complex and challenging issues.	Discussion and facilitation of solution-finding for specific situations.	Clarifies thinking and develops creative approaches that improve leadership effectiveness.

Table 18 CMO configuration 18

Several of the mechanisms were identified by only one participant and gave some insight into specific contexts for them. SG7 identified that *providing reassurance* was an important mechanism. SG7 faced a very steep learning curve and felt out of her depth in her new role. Although her manager was supportive he was running a large

team and did not have the time to provide the input that SG7 needed. Coaching was an additional support and a safe space for SG7 to gain some reassurance that she was on the right track.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
19	Coachee feeling overwhelmed by complexity of situation and willing to share vulnerabilities. Coach able to create supportive relationship. Complex and challenging environment.	Providing reassurance and support.	Builds confidence and increases leadership effectiveness. Increased ability to navigate complexity.

Table 19 CMO configuration 19

The issue of who sets the agenda for the coaching is an interesting mechanism and both the *coachee-driven* and *coach-driven agendas* were identified by SG6. In this case he felt that at the early stage of the coaching he had plenty of things he wanted to discuss but felt that later as I started to offer feedback and deepen the conversation that this extended the benefit of the coaching. In my coaching notes I observed that he had the tendency to stick to operational issues if he set the agenda versus if I guided the conversation to a more reflective learning space.

CMO#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
20	Coachee has specific operational issues or awareness of development needs. Coach willing and able to flex coaching to meet coachee's agenda.	A coachee-led agenda facilitates coachee learning.	Learning that leads to increased leadership effectiveness.
21	Coachee open to feedback, new ideas and learning. Coach able to give feedback and challenge thinking.	A coach-led agenda stimulates reflection and development.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership.

Table 20 CMO configurations 20 and 21

The other mechanisms identified were specific interventions or elements of coaching processes; *timing*, *action and accountability*, *homework* and *goal-focused coaching* that applied to specific cases based on the CF for each coachee. These provided support for one of the initial CMO configurations CMO#8 and #9 which refer to the

specific process and interventions tailored for each participant based on the CF (see section 6.2.1).

6.4 Outcome study summary

The findings from the outcome study supported the initial programme theory (CMO#1) that a coaching approach based on CF had the tendency to develop leadership capabilities and increase the ability to navigate complexity. The outcome study findings also provided the data to identify some of the factors that make coaching work for which people and in what contexts as identified in the CMO configurations above.

Each of the participants identified a different combination of mechanisms that made the coaching effective. While the CMO configurations are presented in table format as individual mechanisms, in reality there would be many interactions between the mechanisms and the context factors. The mechanisms emerged from the interactions between the coach and coachee, therefore the ability of the coach was also a factor in the context elements. The role of the coaching framework in supporting the coach effectiveness is considered in the description of the PAIR framework in section 6.5.

The case studies provided the data to develop specific implementation theory in the form of additional CMO configurations that form the basis for future research and evaluation as well as informing the development of the PAIR framework.

6.5 The PAIR Framework

The initial coaching approach applied the PPP framework (Lane & Corrie 2009, Corrie & Lane 2010) to develop a CF for each coachee. After reviewing the data, and further reflection on the overall process I implemented, it became clear that while the PPP framework provided a foundation for the development of the CF it did not constitute a coaching framework that represented the whole system of coaching involved in applying the CF approach. Important elements of the coaching identified in the data such as the coaching relationship, interactions and interventions needed to be included in a coaching framework. The framework also needed to capture the activities that supported the coach's ability to create the environment for the mechanisms to emerge, which are not captured in the mechanisms identified by the coachees as they only experience the framework's effect through the interaction with the coach.

Reviewing the data from the learning journal, session notes and reflections on coaching sessions, I identified that the activities involved in using the CF approach could be grouped into four clusters. These clusters formed the basis for the revised coaching framework, the Purpose, Account, Intervention, Reflection (PAIR) framework. The PAIR framework is not intended to be a step-by-step linear coaching process. Instead it acts as a guide for a coach by articulating the primary spaces and the activities that might constitute each space. These four components of the PAIR framework inform and influence each other in an ongoing process as the coaching progresses.

The PAIR framework is an attempt to represent more of the whole coaching system involved in creating the conditions for the mechanisms and outcomes to be generated, not just the development of the CF. The following sections outline the four framework spaces, describing each element and identifying the associated CMO configurations.

6.5.1 Purpose

While the PAIR framework is not a linear step-by-step approach, any coaching assignment needs a point of entry, and starting with articulating the purpose serves multiple functions.

In a system that may seem chaotic and complex, establishing the purpose provides focus and contains the coaching assignment within some boundaries, even if the purpose is somewhat high-level or broad-ranging at first (CMO#2). The purpose should be broad enough to provide freedom to explore the complexity of the coachee's situation and enable some structure and order, but not define too narrow a field. As AU5 described it in the post-programme interview, without a purpose to the coaching "you're just talking about issues and floundering around".

Purpose in the context of this framework aims to answer questions such as those outlined in what is the purpose in working with the coachee? What do they wish to achieve? (Corrie & Lane 2010; Lane & Corrie 2009). Executive coaching assignments are generally established with a core issue or question that is to be explored through the coaching. It is rare for an executive who is entering coaching not to have some issue in mind that they wish to explore even if there is no burning

problem to be solved. This issue is often based on dissatisfaction with a current situation along with a desire to improve that situation and achieve an improved state or capability (Lane & Corrie 2009). The purpose element of the coaching framework is distinct from specific goals that may or may not be set as part of the coaching process, which in this framework are considered an intervention. Setting very specific performance-related goals in complex cases may curtail wider exploration and discussion, which in turn may act as a constraint to coaching effectiveness.

Aligning stakeholder views

Other stakeholders may have a view on the purpose of the coaching and it is useful to engage with one or two stakeholders early in a coaching assignment to understand their view on the purpose of the coaching (CMO#3). Some executives may have been referred for coaching; either by their manager or an HR team member. This can make establishing the purpose of the coaching more complex as the coachee and those that referred them may have different views on what is required and the executive may view the coaching as unwelcome. In these instances, it is even more important that the expectations of the different stakeholders are clarified and to consider if the purpose of the coaching is likely to be achieved within the scope of the assignment, such as the time frames and budget of the organisation.

If the stakeholders have a different purpose in mind for the coaching, the coach will need to either align the different perspectives in some way or agree whose purpose will take priority. There are some occasions when this may be more challenging, particularly if the client organisation is not being transparent about the purpose of the coaching. The coach needs to ask the appropriate questions to establish if there is an undisclosed purpose and then make the decision whether to proceed and under what conditions and expectations.

Regardless of where the request for coaching has come from, it is my experience that for a coaching assignment to be successful, the coach needs to engage with the broader system in which the coachee is situated, such as meeting the participant's manager. This provides an opportunity for the coach to establish the role that the manager or other stakeholders in the organisation will play; for example, how the manager or other sponsors will provide ongoing feedback to the coachee or the coach and how they will support the coachee's development. There will also be an opportunity for the coach to get some sense of the broader context such as

organisational culture, business challenges and opportunities, the relationships that the coachee has within the organisation, and how coaching is viewed and experienced in the organisation.

This last point is an important consideration. For example, is coaching used and therefore perceived as a remedial exercise to 'fix' an executive, or as a way of supporting the development of already high-functioning executives? Is coaching a common practice or relatively rare and unknown? Have executives had coaching in the past and how well understood is the coaching process? All of these questions relate to not only clarifying the expectations of the stakeholders but also for a coach to consider the challenges of the assignment and also the appropriateness of coaching and its likelihood of success in the executive's environment.

Revisiting the purpose throughout the coaching

Early in the coaching engagement the coach can use the articulated purpose to evaluate if the services they provide are appropriate or should the participant be referred elsewhere (Corrie & Lane 2010). The coach needs to assess the appropriateness of their skills, experience, training and ability to assist the coachee in meeting the desired purpose. This can be a tough decision for coaches who rely on their organisational clients for their income and are worried about damaging relationships with the client organisation. In the case of the 12 coaching cases for this project it was clear that the purpose was well within my expertise as a coach. However, in the past I have referred other coaches to an assignment or recommended that a psychologist might be more appropriate.

The purpose of the coaching should be revisited as the assignment progresses. It may take several conversations to establish a clear purpose at the start of the engagement and as the coaching conversations unfold, the purpose may be adapted. Revisiting the purpose is an effective way of checking that the coaching is meeting the expectations of the coachee and other stakeholders. It can also provide a way for tracking the progress of the coaching and for measuring the success of the coaching programme. This could be as simple as a conversation with the coachee and/or the stakeholders or a more formal assessment based on measures that were agreed at the start of the assignment.

Throughout the process, the purpose is used as a guidepost to the coaching; a frame that contains the interactions and interventions. When considering which approach to use, which avenue to explore, which hypotheses to test, the purpose forms part of the decision-making process.

6.5.2 *Account*

The account is the CF developed for each coachee. The term *account* is used as it sounds less psychological than CF and references the purpose of the activity as articulated in my definition of coaching CF:

An individualised explanatory account of the dynamic interacting factors that predispose, precipitate or maintain specific behaviours or situations, and those that may enable, support and catalyse change. The case formulation acts as a shared framework for understanding the current situation and identifying multiple pathways to sustainable positive change.

The PAIR framework applies a CR and systems perspective as the underpinning perspective. The complexity of executive coaching engagements requires the ability to see the whole picture, identifying the web of interacting factors involved in any case. Wheatley (1999) has argued that linear thinking hampers creativity and that seeing the wholeness of any complex situation is a new skill. The CR perspective provides a framework that facilitates this thinking across multiple realms and domains, while still providing a theoretically coherent account and avoiding mix-and-match coaching. As the coach and coachee develop the picture of the interacting factors, key hypotheses about how these factors interact can be generated. It may not be possible to definitively identify causality but considering the interaction of the factors and possible feedback loops and patterns provides ideas and hypotheses to be tested.

6.5.3 *Developing the account*

The framework described below provides a structure to enable the construction of an account. It provides the freedom to explore the whole system and then narrow down to investigate specific hypotheses, individual or social factors and patterns.

Table 21 below provides examples of the factors within the different realms and domains that may be explored by the coach in constructing the account. These are examples of what could be included, rather than what should be included. What is actually considered will depend on the purpose and the individual assignment.

This framework enables the coach and coachee to consider the issues and opportunities from many different perspectives and to design an approach that will best suit the individual and their circumstances (CMO#5). For example, if a coachee wishes to develop a more empowering leadership style there are many potential avenues for exploration – at the social level, what types of interactions and behaviours would they want to display? What formal processes might support or hinder this change? If this requires significant changes in behaviour then it may be helpful to identify what current schema, thinking patterns and assumptions may be driving the current behaviours. In addition, the current organisational and broader social cultures can be explored; how will this change in behaviour be received and how can the organisational systems and processes or social structures be leveraged to support the changes in behaviour? What is already working and how can that be leveraged? Considering the social structures such as organisational culture can also assist the coachee in identifying the possible supports, barriers or responses that may be likely and therefore help prepare for the reactions.

	Social Realm	Psychological & physiological Realms (intrapersonal)
Empirical domain – events that are observed or experienced by the coachee, or the coach	Company formal processes. Actual systems. Observations and experiences within the company. Experiences and perceptions of events. Personal objectives agreed with company. Organisational or team goals and challenges. Formal organisational charts. Experiences of others' behaviours. Feedback – direct. Interactions with team, peers, managers and how they are experienced. Interactions with the coach. Interactions in personal life, family dynamics.	Goals – articulated. Patterns of behaviour. Psychometric instrument reports. Observations of own thoughts and psychological processes. Experiences of own emotions. Self and systems-awareness. Visualisation of outcomes. Reflexive self-monitoring. Concrete knowledge. Articulated personal purpose. Medical and wellbeing interventions. Diagnosed illness, test results, measures, observations.

	Social Realm	Psychological & physiological Realms (intrapersonal)
Actual domain – events that may or may not be observed	Events that happen in organisations that aren't necessarily experienced by the participant. Other people's behaviours in response to deep mechanisms. Others' previous experiences and assumptions. Decisions made in absence of coachee. Coach's reflections and case formulation, parallel processes.	Moments of insight. Changes in perspective. Increases in knowledge. Decisions. Thoughts about self and others; "the internal conversation". Reasoning about events – the stories they tell. Metaphors. Tacit knowledge. Levels of energy. Ability to focus.
Deep domain – underlying mechanisms and structures.	Industry, professional structures. Concepts of leadership. Informal networks of relationships. Formal/informal power structures. Company/country/team cultural norms. Social structures. Intergroup dynamics.	Personality traits. Beliefs and values. Action-logic. Heuristics and mental models, schema. Levels of confidence, autonomy, ability to self-regulate. Readiness for change. Motivation for action. Hormonal, chemical, biological factors.

Table 21 Account framework

6.5.4 Structure of the account

There are three key elements that are constructed through the coaching engagement:

- A model of the potential events, mechanisms and factors related to the coaching purpose.
- Hypotheses about interactions, causal mechanisms and feedback loops.
- Proposed process and interventions.

The account is developed throughout the coaching, being updated and revised as more information is uncovered, hypotheses are tested and actions and interventions take place. Initial coaching conversations may be focused on information collection and hypothesis generation but this may well continue throughout the coaching engagement as a richer picture is developed. Information is gathered from conversations with the coachee, other stakeholders, psychometric instruments and reports. It is an iterative process and the aim is not to develop the 'perfect' account but one that facilitates positive changes. Using the framework in table 21 above, a bottom-up approach is used that identifies the possible factors. These factors are

reviewed in the light of relevant theories, literature and experience and hypotheses are developed.

Developing and testing hypotheses

The process of developing and testing hypotheses starts to happen as soon as the coach begins to interact with the coachee or the client stakeholders and continues both in and outside coaching sessions. I am now aware that I do this automatically, drawing on mental models, theory and past experience. Developing the account makes the process explicit and facilitates the process of reflecting on assumptions and exploring alternative perspectives, rather than coaching on auto-pilot because that is how a situation is normally handled or this assignment looks and feels similar to another recent one.

Often hypotheses are formed and tested within the coaching session. In a coaching conversation, testing the hypotheses may simply involve asking more questions, sharing the account or discussing the hypotheses with the coachee.

After the session, analysing and reviewing the data in the light of different approaches and theories provided the opportunity to explore the case from different perspectives and I often found that I would see connections that I did not make in the session (CMO#7).

Documenting the hypotheses can take the form of a descriptive paragraph such as this example drawn from one of the accounts (see CF2 in Appendix 2) where I first looked at the case through the psychological perspective:

The primary driver for the behaviour the company sees as problematic is a fear of failure, which in her current context may be failure to deliver a project to her high standards. If someone looks like getting in the way of her ability to deliver she manages her anxiety by becoming hyper-rational and escalating her assertiveness. This escalates if they refuse to be 'rational'. She does not recognise any value in the relationships and that people have status concerns. She sees these as emotional reasons and will try and use rationality to overcome them. Both sides will escalate. She has a narrow definition of success – delivering her outcomes. (See appendix 2 for full account).

Looking at the social structures provided additional factors to explore as well as considering how factors from both explanations would interact:

The culture of the organisation is a culture where being part of the group is important, relationships are established based on hierarchy. Tenure and seniority are respected and people fear standing out as being different. People who are different are isolated and it is hard to get things done. She stands out as different because she does not buy into this culture. She is respected and supported by the CEO which on one hand offers her some protection. On the other hand people are resentful of her making them even more sensitive to her behaviour, which they interpret as being aloof and superior because of her relationship with the CEO, (see appendix 2 for full account).

Testing the hypotheses may also take the form of gathering additional information or administering psychometric or other forms of assessment. It may also involve the coachee experimenting with different approaches, enacting an action plan and measuring the results or introducing a specific intervention based on a theoretical perspective. The information is then integrated back into the account and the hypotheses updated accordingly.

Designing the process (CMO#8)

The process is an outline of how the coach and coachee will work together. This includes the main interventions that will be used, how data will be gathered, how hypotheses will be tested, when and how the account will be shared with the coachee, and how the coaching will be monitored and measured. This process starts as soon as the coach begins to interact with the coachee and in practice, the process emerges from the interactions as much as it is planned by the coach.

While the coach may have a plan, it needs to be flexible to accommodate new information and events that unfold. Developing and reviewing the account will influence the process as the hypotheses and perspectives pursued will drive a particular approach.

The process will reflect the movement between seeing the whole picture and focusing in on a specific point of intervention. Returning to example of the account labelled CF2 in Appendix 2, the whole picture includes both individual psychological and social structures and their interaction. Specific coaching sessions varied between exploring her beliefs and thinking patterns as well as the social structures that acted as triggers when they interacted with those beliefs.

Corrie and Lane (2010) have argued that each session must be synchronised with the overall purpose of the coaching assignment so that there is a coherence between each session and the overall direction of the work. In practice, while there may be an overall plan for the process it will need to be modified as the coaching progresses. Therefore, it becomes important to allow the process to flow within the framework of the purpose and account and adapt as the coaching unfolds.

A good example of this was observed in the case of AU3 who had a major health issue to manage. Having agreed that it would be helpful for her to continue in the coaching programme, the focus and purpose of the coaching shifted from her leadership capability to dealing with her illness, staying on top of her work and considering her options for the longer term future. We integrated this as much as possible into the work we had started as she didn't want to drop the areas that she had started working on. However, the coaching process became less about holding her accountable for taking actions and more about helping her prioritise, exploring ways to increase her overall wellbeing, and discussing specific issues or major decisions she was facing. The account that I had developed had many different perspectives that I had already considered and I was able to modify my approach integrating other perspectives to provide the support that she needed at this time. For example, we used a positive psychology perspective to consider how she could use her strengths to get through this period, as well as considering overall wellbeing, long term purpose and values.

No single process will fit each situation as each account reflects the individual situation. Each individual's case will be different with many different interacting factors. The same situation for two clients will have many different factors involved and may require a different approach. In complexity theory terms, each case has a different starting point, which are all the context factors within the coachee and their broader environment. The difference in starting point may make a significant difference to the process and outcomes of the coaching. As one example, coaching three people in the same company in cohort two (SG4, SG2 and SG3) showed how each responded in different ways to the company culture based on how individual factors interacted with the social structure.

Working with the coachee's perspective (CMO#6)

The account should start with the coachee's perspectives on what is important, the goals they wish to achieve and evidence that they think is important. The coach can then introduce other elements to help the client see different perspectives, factors that they hadn't considered before and to encourage the coachee to explore how they might be influencing the outcomes. In this way the account is co-created with the coachee and should incorporate hypotheses and actions that make sense to them. The coaching may expand their thinking from this starting point, if appropriate. A good example of how this worked in practice is described by AU4 in the post-programme interview that: "It's your capacity to go slow with me at the beginning.... and then feeding me more stuff and then getting me to the point". This is also identified in CMO configurations #20 and #21 that relate to setting the agenda for each session.

6.5.5 Intervene

For the coaching engagement to generate positive outcomes, the coach and coachee need to disrupt the current patterns in some way. From a complex systems perspective, creative disorder is a key player in any change process as this disruption can enable the system to self-organise into new ways of being (Wheatley 1999). From a coaching perspective the intervention is one way that the system may be disrupted (CMO # 9). This includes specific interventions, the interactions between coach and coachee or the relationship formed through those interactions.

Interaction as Intervention

At the heart of the coaching system are the interactions between the coach and coachee. Through these interactions the conditions for learning and change are created. Cavanagh (2006) describes in the three reflective spaces model how the pattern of interaction between the coach and coachee creates new knowledge, which if useful, will lead to action in the coachee's world. For example through interactions, such as the coach's questions and reflections, the client begins to see their situation differently, questioning some of the assumptions they have previously held. This leads them to being able to see some different ways to act, leading to changes in the broader system.

Using the CR framework for developing the account guides the coach in improving the interactions, asking questions that open up the field of enquiry. This in itself acts as an intervention because it reveals insights about their situation to the coachee,

provides the space for reflection and can assist them in taking different perspectives. In this way, developing the account becomes one of the factors in generating the reflective space mechanism (CMO#12).

There are many other aspects of the interaction that may form an intervention and Stout-Roston (2006) has developed a code book of coaching interventions that attempts to capture the elements within coaching conversations that may act as interventions. This includes types of questions asked, types of reflective statements, summarising statements, using humour and challenging, and illustrates the many ways in which the interaction can form an intervention. Each of these elements of the interaction may assist in creating the reflective space or be mechanisms in their own right.

Relationship as intervention (CMO #10).

As a result of the interactions, a relationship is established between the coach and coachee. Humanistic approaches to coaching see the relationship itself as a source of change as it is through the relationship that the coachee can explore their experience. A positive relationship requires the coach to be able to demonstrate empathy, unconditional positive regard and authenticity. These qualities allow the coachee to experience a sense of being known and through this, help them know themselves too (Stober 2006). A number of studies have found that a positive, authentic relationship between the coach and coachee is a key factor in the effectiveness of executive coaching (Baron & Morin 2009; Boyce, Jackson & Neal, 2010; de Haan, Culpin & Curd 2011; Grant 2014).

Developing the positive relationship requires the coach to be able to put aside their own reactions to the coachee's story and be able to maintain the stance of hypothesis in relation to the account and theories the coach and coachee are holding in mind (Stober 2006). This often requires the coach to move into the reflection space of the PAIR framework.

As identified in the context factors in the case study data, the development of a positive relationship also requires the active participation of the coachee. It is difficult to work effectively with a coachee who is not willingly and actively participating in the coaching relationship. Part of the contracting process sets the expectations of the coaching relationship and the roles that both parties will play. This can be particularly

challenging if the coaching is mandated. If a trusting and collaborative relationship is not established early in the coaching engagement it is unlikely that the coaching will be successful. As shown in the data, one mechanism associated with building trust may be to develop coach credibility through the interactions in the early stages of the coaching (CMO#17).

The account as intervention

There are a number of ways in which developing and sharing the account constitute an intervention. The process of information gathering to inform the account may act as an intervention, even without sharing the framework and process with the coachee.

Explicitly involving the client in the development of the account is another way that the account acts as an intervention. The coachee actively participates in the construction of the account although the coach will guide the conversation through the questions and sharing the framework. The coach and coachee can develop and share hypotheses, identify areas they would like to target, consider specific actions, and design an appropriate process. A mindset of experimentation is needed by both the coach and coachee as even the best account will not have all the factors involved clearly identified and so testing hypotheses is one way of generating more information.

If the coach chooses not to fully co-construct the account, hypotheses about the coachee's situation can be shared and discussed. This is one way of testing the hypotheses as well as gathering additional information. Sharing the picture of the interacting factors and the system as the coach sees it can be helpful to the client and from which they can generate their own hypotheses. One example came in the sessions with AU1 where we explored his experience of the culture of the organisation and how it had developed under the previous managing director. We related this experience to what the current leader was doing to disrupt that culture and the changes in leadership style that AU1 was making.

A coach will need to rely on their understanding of the coachee to judge how much and when to share the account. In some cases, sharing the account can be intimidating to the coachee who might feel that they have been unmasked (Corrie & Lane 2010), rather than being seen and heard in the humanistic sense.

Specific purposeful interventions

Based on the account, specific interventions are introduced into the coaching sessions or agreed actions are conducted by the coachee between sessions. As each coachee's case and account are different, the interventions will vary but are all derived from the account. The findings from the case studies in this project illustrate how each assignment can be effective through a different combination of mechanisms. Some participants identified goal setting and holding them accountable, for others it was feedback, the reflective space and the application of new theories to address the feedback.

Within coaching sessions, interventions may be specific coaching techniques or tools based in a specific theory that is relevant to the coachee's case. This might include specific questioning frameworks, or techniques from different modes of coaching such as cognitive-behavioural coaching, solution-focused questions or setting of specific goals.

The setting of specific goals is different to the overall purpose of the coaching. The assumption that specific goals will be set early in the coaching engagement does not always apply as it may take some time to develop the account and identify if and what the specific goals might be. In many complex situations the specific outcome goals may be set later in the coaching process, or even not until the end of the coaching.

In complex cases, it is likely that solutions will address different elements of the system and the account forms the basis for developing creative solutions and what Schon (1987) calls professional artistry. It is the development of the account that provides the basis for selecting purposeful interventions that form a coherent solution, rather than a mix-and-match approach which has no theoretical framework to hold it together. This professional artistry includes introducing interventions that are not planned for a specific session because information emerges that changes the picture or leads to a different realm of exploration. It is impossible to predict what may happen in each session and while holding the account in mind is important, it is used as a guide rather than a fixed plan for each session.

Whatever interventions are introduced, complex systems with many interacting variables are unpredictable. Coach and coachee should consider the possible

unintended consequences of any interventions so that the options can be considered and risks of any particular course of action evaluated.

6.5.6 Reflect

Reviewing how I applied the CF approach, I found that reflection was a fundamental component and is therefore integral to the PAIR framework. As with the other elements, it is not intended that there is a separate reflection stage, although reflection may be a specific separate activity. Instead there is a dynamic interplay of reflection within and between the other elements of the PAIR framework, such as reflecting-in-action during a coaching session or in developing an account.

Purpose of reflection in the PAIR framework

The primary purpose of the reflection element of the PAIR framework is to disrupt the system and generate change of some description, in this case in the coach. This could mean changes in core assumptions and beliefs, increased self-awareness, motivation, or coaching skills and competence. It may also result in generating insights into connections and interactions or avenues for change.

This process of the interaction between the information from the coachee and the coach's personal reflective space is well described by Cavanagh (2006) in the three reflective spaces model:

Here it continues to interact with the coach's experience, mental models, emotions, personality, history, and so on, and we begin to see patterns as the client's data elicits ideas, images, metaphors, and theories. Meaning or knowledge begins to emerge for us in this process. This processing often continues post session and during the coach's supervision (p.339).

The coaching system and processes may subsequently also be altered as a result of the reflection. The coaching system includes the interactions and relationship between the coach and the coachee. As a result of a reflective activity or process, the coach may modify the account, the structure of sessions, communication style, and specific interventions and approaches, improving the quality of the interactions.

Reflective processes and practices

These changes may be generated through both reflection-in-action as well as reflection-on-action and in this way reflection is both integrated with and interacts with the other elements of the PAIR framework.

For example, reviewing and reflecting on the account both interacts and is integrated with the process of developing the account. This takes several forms: to evaluate what assumptions or biases are reflected in decisions about what is included or not and to question if different perspectives or theories could be useful; looking for connections between the elements in the account, and generating alternative hypotheses to be tested. This might be done both during the session and in post-session reviews.

Reviewing coaching sessions is another reflective activity that is very useful. In professional practice I would not normally record my sessions but having recorded the coaching sessions and used them for reflection as part of my research, I believe on occasion it is useful to do so, assuming the permission of the coachee and organisational client. It can be quite confronting to listen to coaching sessions but it is helpful in raising awareness of potential patterns of interactions and in having a specific example session to reflect on.

Whether a session has been recorded or not, another useful exercise is reflecting on 'critical incidents'. Interactions or sessions that were particularly effective or difficult for some reason provides useful content to stimulate reflection.

Reflections on coaching sessions are guided by these questions, which are adapted from the reflection model of Fook & Gardner (2006).

- What worked well? What does working well mean in this context?
- What was not as effective and what does not effective mean?
- What does this tell me about the hypotheses about the coachee and their situation?
- What would I need to change about my beliefs or perspectives to help me do something different or differently next time?
- What would I do differently next time?
- What does this situation/case tell me about my values or assumptions?
- Are there any gaps between my espoused theories and theories in use?
- How did my beliefs and assumptions interact with the social context in this situation?
- What different assumptions and beliefs would cause me act differently in this situation? What would the impact of that be on the coachee?

There are several approaches and processes used to practice reflection-in-action. As Schon (1987) suggests, a surprise or jolt experienced during the coaching interaction can be a useful prompt to examine what is happening. This jolt might be an unexpected response from the coachee to a question or other intervention. Examining the interaction in the moment will often reveal assumptions or other forms of bias that can be useful for considering how else a question can be phrased or how a situation can be approached differently to achieve a different response.

Often these jolts are unexpected answers, reactions or responses from the coachee, which provided an opportunity to reflect in the moment and adapt to the ongoing interaction or try another approach. This is particularly the case in cross-cultural coaching where questions routinely used with coachees in Australia sometimes prompted unexpected replies or reactions.

Another jolt may be the emotional response that is experienced when a coachee is describing a particular situation, where energy shifts (up or down) or there is some other surprise in an interaction. A good example of this was the language used by AU2 during an early session where he described that he wanted to get better at “extracting value” from other people. I found this term gave me a jolt of surprise and disapproval and this reaction was used later in the coaching as part of a conversation about how he is perceived by his peers that proved very useful to the coachee. It was also useful for me to reflect later on why I reacted as I did.

Another prompt for reflection-in-action is if the coaching conversation or engagement is stuck in a particular pattern of interaction. In that case, reflecting on the interactions and what part I’m playing in the conversation being stuck (my values, beliefs and assumptions or my question or approaches for example) can help develop some ideas for shifting the nature of the conversation. This might include providing feedback in the moment on how I think the conversation is getting stuck and asking the coachee if they feel the same, asking different questions, or disclosing how the repetitive nature of the conversation is making me feel.

Reflection with others

The other key reflective activity is professional supervision and this supported the development of my reflective capabilities. Through the research project, I had formal supervision both with a professional supervisor and with a peer. These sessions

encouraged me to reflect on areas that I had missed in my own activities and helped me examine my reflective processes. This further demonstrated to me the value of supervision in bringing another perspective to my coaching cases, as despite my reflection activities I found there was always further learning to be gained and other perspectives to consider.

Reflection is a mechanism identified in the coach development case study described in section 6.6. Incorporating reflection into the PAIR framework not only supports the coach's effectiveness during the coaching assignment, it also incorporates a mechanism for ongoing professional development into the framework.

6.5.7 Summary

It is difficult to capture something that is as fluid and complex as coaching in a model. However, the PAIR framework represents at a high level the overall system of implementing a CF approach in executive coaching. It provides a framework of the four spaces that a coach moves between in an effective application of the approach.

In practice, coaching interactions will often involve operating in all spaces (and sometimes simultaneously) in a fluid and iterative fashion with one conversation moving from considering coaching purpose, gathering information, testing hypotheses and in itself being an intervention.

Figure 6 below shows the spaces as being contained by the purpose of the coaching, and the other spaces overlapping within that container with reflection acting as the connector and a way of processing information between spaces. Information and interactions flow between the coachee and coach through this system. The coaching system is conceptualised as an open system with information from both the coachee and coach systems entering and changing the coaching and also feeding back into the broader systems.

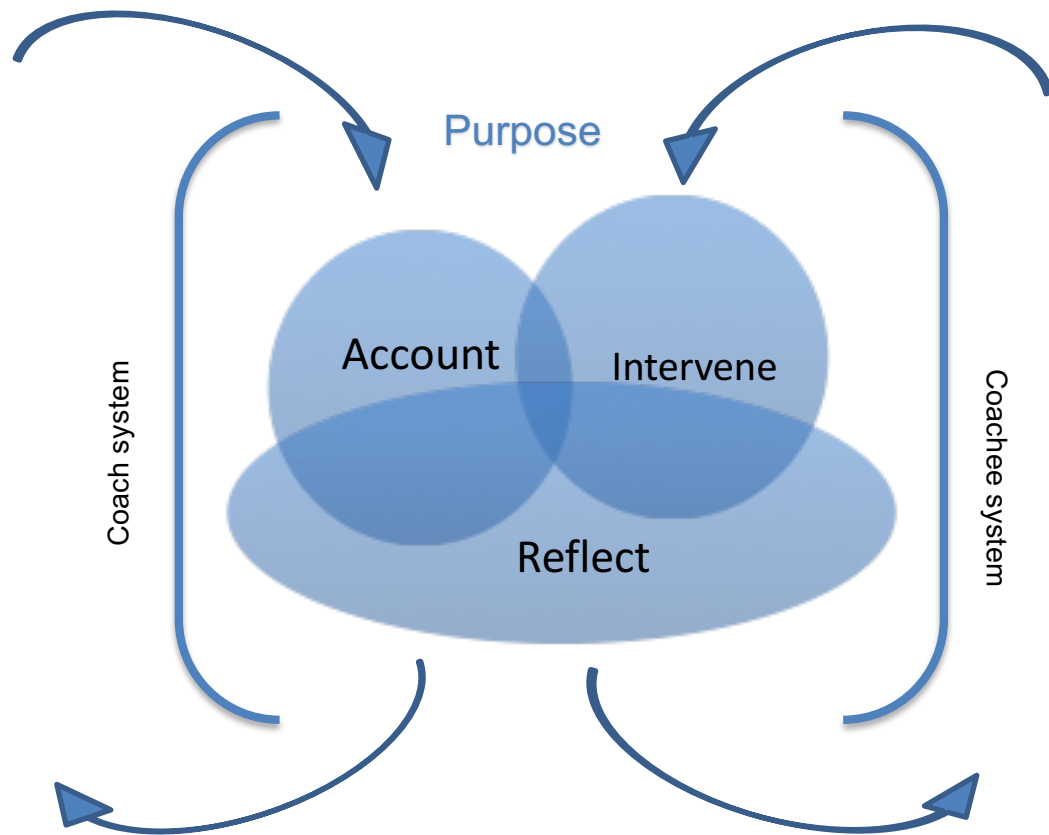


Figure 6 The PAIR framework

I expect that with additional experience in using the framework, ongoing testing and review of the CMO configurations and programme theory, that the PAIR framework will continue to evolve. As I continue to use it in my professional practice and share my framework with other coaches who will have different perspectives, additional CMO configurations would add to and modify the underpinning implementation theory.

6.6 Coach Development Case Study

The coaching framework is one factor in increasing coaching effectiveness and another factor is the capability of the coach in applying the framework. The third aim of this project was to explore the professional development outcomes and mechanisms of development for a coach in completing the research project and using the coaching framework. The high-level programme theory being evaluated was that an experienced practising executive coach (context) researching, developing and evaluating a framework of coaching that applied a CF approach (mechanism) would

increase the effectiveness of their coaching for complex cases, such as developing leaders to navigate complexity (outcome).

6.6.1 Developmental outcomes

One of the primary measures for my development was the SCTi-MAP. The SCTi-MAP was completed in May 2012 and again in April 2014 and on both occasions were scored by Susanne Cook-Greuter. There are two scores produced by the SCTi-MAP, the first of which is the total weighted score (TWS). The TWS is produced through statistical analyses of the answers, with later stage answers weighted more than those scored at earlier stages. As movement from one action-logic to another is relatively rare, the TWS is useful in that it provides an indication of development within a stage, which was the case with my results.

The second score is the total protocol rating (TPR), which as a result of a combination of qualitative and quantitative assessments provides the assessor's overall summary of action-logic. Table 20 below summarises the differences in my scores from 2012 to 2014.

Measure	2012	2014
TWS	277	285
TPR	4/5 <i>individualist</i> with secondary position an <i>achiever</i>	4/5 + Solid <i>individualist</i>
Percentage of profile scored as <i>achiever</i> action-logic sentences	41.7%	22.2%
Percentage of profile scored as <i>individualist</i> action-logic sentences	47.2%	63.9%
Percentage of profile scored as <i>strategist</i> action-logic sentences	11.1%	13.9%

Table 22 Summary of SCTi-Map results

In 2012 my TPR was as an *individualist* action-logic with a secondary position as an *achiever* with a TPR of 4/5. This meant that while I was making sense of my experiences from the position of an *individualist* in some situations, many of my answers indicated an earlier stage *achiever* action-logic. In 2014 I had developed into a solid *individualist* action-logic.

The commentary from Susanne Cook-Greuter included this summary:

The responses in your profile indicate that you are currently making sense of experience from the perspective of a solid *individualist* with a beginning capacity to see self in a more systematic and pattern-conscious way. ...You have clearly shifted away from the *achiever* towards a more fully post-conventional way of making sense of things. This is especially evident in relativizing statements, it depends, and your awareness of cultural context and conditioning. With over 20 words on average per completion, you also show the increasing cognitive complexity that becoming more and more aware entails (p.9).

These results indicate a shift away from the rational, goal-driven, future-focused mindset of the *achiever* action-logic to being more focused on the experiences of the moment and myself as the experiencer along with the systems awareness and multi-perspectives view of the *individualist* as described in section 3.4. This shift in meaning-making can also be seen in other outcomes evident in the learning journal, session notes, session reflections and case accounts.

A more systemic mindset is evident in the way in which I see coaching cases and the coaching process. The importance of the interaction in a system is very much front of mind with a greater focus on creating the relationship and developing a reflective space. Using a systems perspective to create the account has assisted me in moving from the whole picture to an individual element and then back to the whole. There are many examples in the case studies of this process taking place but particularly in cohort two where I used a bottom-up approach to developing the account.

The *individualist* action-logic considers alternative perspectives and is interested in going beyond the traditional scientific approach to explore the social and cultural assumptions, making these visible to themselves and others (Cook-Greuter 2006). This is evident in the CR approach to CF that I applied as well as in how I have integrated other perspectives into my coaching practice. For example, the constructive-developmental perspective has been of particular use in understanding what approaches may be most effective depending on the action-logic of the coachee. I also have a greater understanding of different approaches to leadership development that now inform how I approach a particular case. The addition of these perspectives provides me with other options for intervention over and above the GF-SF cognitive-behavioural approach in which I trained at the University of Sydney.

The *individualist* action-logic is less interested in doing, and more in being and feeling. This shift is evident in the learning journal and session reflections. Early on in the project, reflections on coaching sessions tended to be about techniques, such as questions asked or the way a session progressed (doing and outcomes). Later in the learning journal, reflections are related to building my self-awareness or reflection on what caused specific reactions and how I felt at the time. For example, in one session, SG4 is sharing some of the experiences she has been having with some of her colleagues. During the session I felt anger on her behalf and needed to manage my emotions during the conversation. It was useful to reflect that the behaviour she was describing ran counter to my values and also revealed that I was very much on SG4's side. This raised the question of whether I was over-identifying with her and how this could impact my ability to work with her. Reflecting in this way is more developmental for me as a coach; it's not only a matter of skill or knowledge, but about how I interact in the session so that what I intend to do is not de-railed by my own reactions.

This shift is also evident in my improved ability to reflect-in-action. I became more able to reflect not only on the case; developing the account and testing hypotheses as the coaching session progressed, but also on my thinking and feeling about the coaching in the moment. For example, reflecting in the moment on an emotion I was feeling and being able to use this in the coaching was something that I became more adept at using. This might be used in providing feedback to assist a coachee in considering the effect of their behaviour on others and to encourage them to consider other perspectives.

Reflecting-in-action also provided me with warning signs that the coaching may be veering off track or was not effective. For example, am I feeling a lack of energy and what is causing me to experience that? Or, am I doing too much talking and what is leading me to do that? Am I failing to challenge the thinking because I'm over-identifying or need to be liked by the coachee? These reflections-in-action would often assist me in getting the session back on track.

The *individualist* action-logic is more aware of cultural and personal conditioning and this is also evident in the way in which I approach coaching in cross-cultural situations. In some instances I would experience an emotional response to the situations being described by my Singaporean coachees. On reflection, I could see that these responses were triggered by my personal and cultural conditioning.

In addition, the GF-SF approach to coaching stems from an *achiever* action-logic and so may not always be appropriate in a culture which is shaped predominately by a diplomat or expert culture as found in some Singaporean companies. Using the CR case formulation approach was helpful in working through potential ways to approach cases in different cultural contexts.

6.6.2 *Other outcomes*

As well as the developmental progression there were a number of other outcomes including developing specific coaching skills, research capability and increased knowledge.

The ability to develop an account and apply it is a significant outcome of the project. At the start of the project I had very little awareness of the CF approach or how it might be used in coaching. As the project progressed, my skill in developing the accounts increased and this now forms the backbone of my coaching practice.

My ability to reflect on individual cases also improved. The discipline of reflecting on the case to update the account and to develop hypotheses assisted me in seeing links and in considering the whole picture rather than just seeing the case through one lens. This provided me with more options to pursue and hypotheses to test, which in turn provided more options for the coachee to consider.

There were a number of specific skills that improved during the process of developing and using the coaching framework, such as asking more effective questions, providing effective feedback and creating a reflective space. Reflections in the learning journal point to the development of these skills such as the entries in the journal about asking meaning questions rather than content questions (Garvey Berger 2012) and also in practising asking reflective questions to facilitate learning.

I have also developed more awareness of the importance of the language I use and how the coachee understands it, particularly in a cross-cultural context. My awareness of this was raised on reflection on a 'critical incident' with SG5. We had been using the term 'accountability' and I made the assumption that SG5 would understand that there are various ways of holding people accountable; expressing disappointment, discussing expectations, reflecting on learning from the situation,

losing informal rewards, or formal disciplinary processes. For SG5, being held accountable had only a single meaning; that you were going to lose your job. Consequently when several of his team failed to deliver on a project, he took the extreme position of telling them that next time something similar happened, they would all lose their jobs. My reflections led me to be much more aware of needing to enquire further on the meanings terms have for individuals.

Research Capability

Three outcomes were identified relating to research capability and my development as a scientist-practitioner: understanding of research methodology and methods; the ability to source and critically evaluate relevant literature and concepts; and the ability to complete and document the research project.

Completing the research project required me to develop an understanding of research methodology. Extracts from the learning journal illustrate my exploration of the appropriate methodology, attempting to understand and modify an RE approach and experimenting with data analysis methods. With little published research conducted using RE methodology, and none in the coaching field, this project required me to design and experiment with an approach through adapting RE as a methodology for coaching research.

To complete this project, I made a broad sweep of the literature and I needed to develop my ability to find appropriate resources, quickly assess their usefulness, critically evaluate the concepts and develop ideas on how they could be applied in my project. Extracts from the learning journal show me critically reflecting on the literature and questioning how it can be applied. For example, in my journal there are reflections that much of the literature on leadership development, particularly that applying complexity theory to leadership, is highly theoretical with little practical application. I also reflected that there was little literature that considered both interpersonal and intrapersonal factors in developing leaders.

Developing my research capability will be a key part of my continuing development as a scientist-practitioner as the RE approach can be used not only to complete further research but also as a way of developing an approach for the evaluation of specific coaching programmes.

6.6.3 Mechanisms of Coach Development

It is possible to identify patterns in the coach case study data that point to a number of mechanisms associated with the outcomes identified above.

There were six mechanisms: *expanding knowledge* (through reading, workshops or training), *journaling*, *experiential learning* (experimenting, practice), *reflective processes*, *supervision* and *writing*.

Expanding knowledge is linked to a number of outcomes. Early in the programme, reading widely was central to developing the ideas for the coaching approach, research methodology and understanding of alternative perspectives. For example, reading Corrie and Lane (2010) led me to the CF approach that underpins the PAIR framework. Attending the workshop with Susanne Cook-Greuter was the foundation to understanding how to apply the constructive-developmental perspective to my own and my coachee's development.

As the project developed, the process of keeping the learning journal (*journaling* mechanism) interacted with the *expanding knowledge* mechanism to assist me make links between concepts and articulate my thoughts.

Entries in the journal show me reading and then thinking about how to apply a theory or perspective to a case, for example this learning journal extract from June 2012:

Reading Wheatley (1999): In order for a system to change and grow the system needs to be off-balance: in a state of non-equilibrium. This can be applied to people as systems as well. We talk about being out of our comfort zone in terms of learning. If I was applying this concept to AU5 then we could say that he has been acting in his comfort zone for many years. By providing feedback we are starting to perturb the system and therefore help him grow and change.

This interaction between *expanding knowledge* and *journaling* is also linked to improved coaching practice as in the example below from the learning journal dated April 2012:

Reading the J Garvey Berger book about Growing on the Job: Found the section on asking content versus meaning questions useful. Can look at my own sessions and already see where I have asked a content question when I could have asked a much more useful question about meaning, learning etc.

Theoretical knowledge was explored through reading and journaling and *experiential learning* was a mechanism for applying the theory to the PAIR framework, increasing skill in using a CF approach and in improving coaching practice. This involved piloting the CF approach and using the learning journal to explore and reflect on the experiences. For example, in this extract from November 2013, I am exploring when and how to share a CF with a coachee:

Thinking about whether to share the CF or not – level of adult development (action-logic) could play a part here. For example, did share it with RM because she is at that stage (*achiever?*). For people who are not ready for that and who don't see a lot of complexity – how do you go about sharing it – is it more a case of building it together through questioning but not calling it a case formulation. Let's build a picture of what's going on, what are the factors at play? And then only fill out the bits that they can see to share with them.

This *experiential learning* mechanism also helped in integrating or applying different perspectives into my coaching. For example, in April 2012 I attended a workshop with Susanne Cook-Greuter for training in using the SCTi-MAP and a constructive-developmental approach to coaching. Understanding the theory is a starting point but working out how to apply it requires practical experience. In this case, the *experiential learning* mechanism also interacted with the both the *supervision* and *reflective processes* mechanisms. Professional supervision provided the support needed to discuss cases from a constructive-developmental perspective and integrate this perspective into the account for specific coachee case studies.

The *reflective processes* mechanism was central to most of the outcomes. As described above, my ability to reflect both in and on action improved throughout the project and became a key part of the PAIR framework.

Reflective processes were identified in the learning journal as an important mechanism in the developmental outcomes as measured by the SCTi-MAP. Reflecting on experiences, journaling about how I think and feel at a particular point in the project and then enquiring on these reflections were all important aspects of development.

The mechanism of *supervision* included discussion with my academic supervisor and was primarily linked to the outcomes in research capability, but also in developing coaching practice. My supervisor would question and challenge my ideas and provide feedback in order to increase the quality of the research process as well as the development and application of the coaching framework. For example, after

completing the first cohort of case studies we discussed that having piloted the PPP approach with these coachees, this did not constitute a practical framework of coaching and from there I embarked on developing the PAIR framework.

Professional practice supervision is also included in this mechanism as I received ongoing peer and individual supervision throughout the project. This often focused on a specific case and my reflections on the case, approaches and perspectives to use as well as developing the account. This is linked to improved coaching effectiveness as well as developing my complexity of mind and reflective-practitioner capability.

Finally the mechanism of *writing* was an important element of developing and articulating ideas, as well as my ability to communicate through written material. The process of writing, reading the document and editing forced me to formulate and articulate arguments clearly. In so doing, my thinking would change as I would see other links or the argument would become evident.

6.6.4 *Interacting Context Factors and CMO Configurations*

As with the development of executives, the development of a coach is also a complex system with the mechanisms for change emerging from and interacting with layers of context as well as other mechanisms. Context factors include having the resources, the motivation, curiosity and self-belief to pursue the research and the supportive relationships to facilitate learning.

Based on the outcomes, mechanisms and context factors identified in the data, a number of CMO configurations can be identified. The numbering is prefixed with CD for Coach Development to differentiate these CMO configurations from those associated with the coachee outcomes.

#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
CD1	A motivated and curious coach with access to resources and a supportive environment.	Expanding knowledge through formal and informal learning.	Development as scientist-practitioner Increased coaching effectiveness.

#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
CD2	A motivated and disciplined coach in a supportive environment.	Journaling.	Development as a reflective-practitioner. Increased coaching effectiveness.
CD3	A motivated coach with access to relevant learning experiences and in a supportive environment.	Using experiential learning.	Development as reflective and scientist-practitioner. Increased coaching effectiveness.
CD4	Open and motivated coach with access to qualified supervisor and in a supportive environment.	Supervision.	Development as reflective-practitioner. Increased coaching effectiveness.
CD5	Motivated and disciplined coach in a supportive environment.	Reflective processes.	Development as reflective-practitioner. Increased coaching effectiveness.
CD 6	Motivated coach in a supportive environment.	Writing.	Development as reflective-practitioner. Development as scientist-practitioner.

Table 23 Coach development CMO configurations

6.6.5 Coach Case Study Summary

The experience of completing the doctor of professional studies programme has been a developmental experience. The mechanisms identified are not only relevant to coaches completing this process but also to any coach who wishes to continue their ongoing development. It is clear that reflective practice is a key element to my development, however, it requires some training and discipline to implement. Supervision can provide the support to develop this reflective capability. Overall these outcomes add up to me being more effective in dealing with complex coaching engagements, such as developing a leader's ability to navigate complexity and are indicative of my development as a reflective-practitioner.

6.7 Discussion

This section discusses the results of this project in relation to existing relevant research and literature and also explores the strengths and limitations of this study.

6.7.1 CF and executive coaching

I have argued that developing leaders and their capabilities to navigate complexity is itself a complex task. Rather than developing a standardised model, an approach based on the application of CF to coaching was developed, resulting in the PAIR framework.

A number of challenges to applying a CF approach to executive coaching were identified in section 3.7.3. The first potential challenge was to implement a CF approach in a way that engaged executives, many of whom are highly action-oriented. The PAIR framework addresses this challenge in several ways. Firstly, commencing coaching with a discussion of the coaching purpose gives confidence to the executives and other stakeholders that the coaching has a sense of direction and the opportunity to agree on the desired outcomes.

Secondly, the account is developed through ongoing and iterative collaboration with the participant. From the start of the coaching, the coach and participant are actively engaged in gathering information, developing and testing hypotheses and implementing specific agreed actions. These activities may add information to the account and also act as specific interventions. Either way they give the coachee the sense of momentum and progress. In addition, framing the development of the account as a hypothesis-testing enterprise (Teachman & Clerkin 2010), engages the coachee in experimentation and an exploratory process, rather than the CF being handed to them as a 'diagnosis', which they may reject.

The further challenge was that the terminology 'case formulation' has a clinical connotation that may be intimidating to non-psychologically trained coaches and their coachees. This was addressed in the PAIR framework by using the term 'account'.

Another question raised in section 3.7.2 was whether it is necessary or appropriate to develop an account in all cases. Given the diversity of the 12 participants in this study, I found that it was a useful process even when dealing with less complex cases. For example, my work with SG3 was largely skills and performance coaching that

helped him develop and apply some basic people management techniques. This would be considered what Corrie and Lane (2009) term horizontal development and therefore may not require the development of an account. However, in order to make these changes there were other factors that needed to be considered such as the social and organisational culture where having one-on-one meetings between manager and direct report is not the norm. Current mindset and beliefs about being a manager and SG3's role were also explored and using the account framework helped him consider the multiple factors involved in what could otherwise be deemed a straightforward change. Making an assumption early in the coaching that a case does not require an account could lead a coach to overlook important factors. In the end, the account may be relatively simple but engaging in the process of its development is still a valuable exercise.

The validity or reliability of the coaching accounts developed with the coaching participants were not formally evaluated. This is a challenge for CF research in all branches of psychology and there have been some limited attempts to develop a method for evaluating the quality of formulations.

Persons (1998, 2008) has argued that if a CF makes sense to the client in terms of the hypotheses that are developed, then it is considered to have some validity. This is the approach that has been adopted in this research and if the coachee felt that the account and the resulting hypotheses made sense to them, then we considered it a valid account.

Secondly, whether the account is functional can be evaluated through the outcomes of the coaching and assessing whether the coaching achieved the coaching purpose or not. As discussed in the findings above, in this research the coachees found the coaching beneficial and that significant achievements were made in many instances. However, measuring the outcomes of executive coaching programmes presents its own challenges, which are discussed in section 6.7.4.

If the CF approach is to be used more widely in executive coaching, developing some formal measures or a process for evaluating the reliability and validity of the account would be beneficial for professional practice. Eells, Kendjelic and Lucas (1998) have attempted to do this for clinical psychology through the development of a content coding method that can be used to reliably categorise the information that a clinician

uses along with scales for evaluating the content quality. In the Eells et al (1998) model, the categories include descriptive information, predisposing events, and inferred mechanisms. Overall quality is scored based on the inclusion and integration of the information in these categories and further quality ratings are given for the degree of inference, complexity and precision of language. To support the evaluation of the accounts used in executive coaching, a similar method could be developed, starting with agreement on the core components of an executive coaching account and guidelines for quality.

6.7.2 *Mechanisms and context*

Part of the rationale for using an RE methodology was to understand not just the outcomes of the coaching programmes but also what made the coaching effective. Identifying the mechanisms that are described in section 6.3 is a starting point for developing this understanding.

A mechanism missing from the findings is the identification of the account itself as a coaching mechanism. For the majority of the participants I would share hypotheses, the theoretical perspectives on which I was drawing, and the proposed coaching process. These represented elements of the account that were made explicit in the coaching and the mechanisms that the coachees identified may reflect these elements. For example, SG1 identified the application of theory to frame her personal development as a leader, and for SG4 her reflections on the coaching included the hypotheses that we discussed. In both cases this could be seen as the account acting as a mechanism.

The CR framework for developing the account was only shared with one coachee (SG1). We used the framework in one session to develop a picture of the factors that were affecting her motivation levels. At the end of the session she stated that she felt that the exercise had given her a new perspective on the challenge and that she found it helpful, however it was not mentioned in her post-programme interview.

The development of the account and the PAIR framework may not be named as specific mechanisms, but as argued by Kendjelic and Eells (2007) in relation to psychological therapy practice, the use of the account may increase the confidence of the coach and the coachee's confidence in the coach. In addition, the framework is likely to be part of what creates other mechanisms such as the reflective space, the

relationship and the selection and application of specific individualised interventions. This illustrates how difficult it can be to untangle all the mechanisms and context factors involved in the complex interaction of executive coaching.

The context factors relating to the participants are also likely to be a major contributing factor in all of the mechanisms. In the psychotherapy field, Lambert and Barley (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to understand the factors that influenced client outcomes. They found that 40% of the variance in outcomes was accounted for by extra-therapeutic factors such as fortuitous events or social support and a further 15% of the variance outcomes could be accounted for by the expectancy effects (Lambert & Barley 2001).

In this study there were few measures that aimed to understand the individual differences in the participants and their circumstances. Levels of motivation and belief in their ability to change were subjective and other potential context factors were gathered through the interviews. Based on my experience in this study, areas that might be useful to explore in future research include more formal assessment of readiness for change, action-logic stage, levels of motivation or personality factors.

The context of the organisation and broader social culture could also be further investigated. One of the factors that appeared to be important was the organisational support and investment in leadership development and the interaction of this context factor with the coaching intervention. There are several implications for practice for both coaches and organisations of this observation. For example, what is the effect of introducing coaching into an environment where there has been little in the way of leadership development? While coaching might make a difference at an individual level it would be useful to understand what part the company culture plays in blocking or multiplying the effects of the coaching. This would help both executive coaches and the purchasers of coaching services set realistic expectations for the coaching and the likely return on investment.

Another example of the complexity of understanding the interacting context factors is provided by an interesting pattern that emerged in the data from this study. The positive relationship mechanism was only mentioned by those in cohort one. There is limited research that has studied the importance of the relationship in coaching (Baron & Morin 2009; Boyce, Jackson & Neal, 2010; de Haan, Culpin & Curd 2011; Grant

2014) and none that has investigated what makes the relationship important for some people over others. Grant (2014) has questioned whether the relationship factor may be less important in coaching than in psychotherapy. In an exploratory study, Grant (2014) found that the supportive coaching relationship accounted for only 8.4% of the variance in coaching outcomes rather than the 30% found for a psychotherapeutic relationship (Lambert & Barley 2001).

In this project, there may be an element of cultural differences in how relationships are viewed, which is discussed in section 6.7.3. Other factors might include personality, or interpersonal style or the action-logic of the coachee. Although unmeasured, my sense is that the action-logic of cohort two is more likely to be *diplomat* to *expert* whereas cohort one is more likely to be *expert* to *achiever*. The *achiever* action-logic is able to conceptualise the relationship as an entity in itself, whereas a *diplomat* would not have this visibility as yet.

Action-logic may be a context factor for both the coach and coachee in relation to a number of other mechanisms such as valuing feedback, valuing or even expecting the coach to provide input, wanting to discuss day-to-day issues and focus on task rather than people, or the importance of coach credibility (particularly important to *expert* action-logic). More research that identifies the action-logic as a context factor and establishes if there are patterns of mechanisms associated with different action-logic stages would provide useful insights.

There are also likely to be many interactions between the mechanisms, with mechanisms becoming context factors for another mechanism. For example, coach credibility would influence the development of the relationship. Each of the participants in this research identified a different combination of mechanisms and this highlights the importance of seeing each assignment as unique and developing a specific approach for each coaching participant.

6.7.3 Cross-cultural coaching and the PAIR framework

The challenge and opportunity of cross-cultural coaching became part of my research in cohort two. This provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the PAIR framework in meeting the challenges of cross-cultural coaching.

Executive or business coaching has developed from a predominantly US and European background and consequently has assumed a worldview that is not universally applicable (Rosinski 2010). With increased globalisation, many organisations operate worldwide, have international trade partners and employ a highly diverse and mobile workforce. For coaches working in this environment, whether in their home country or working internationally, these factors introduce the additional complexity of cultural factors to the coaching context.

Singapore is a global city with a diverse international workforce and many assignments taking place in this environment include an element of cross-cultural coaching, particularly in Western multinationals. Even major Singaporean corporations and government institutions are not immune from the challenges of working across cultures, as they seek to expand internationally or employ expatriate executives in order to build local capabilities.

There are many layers of cross-cultural issues that emerge in coaching assignments in this context. Not only may the coach and coachee be from different cultures, the coachee may be working for a global company with headquarters in another country, working with people from multiple cultures and managing teams of people from the local country as well as expatriates. For example, SG5 is a Singaporean working for a Dutch multinational. He is the General Manager (GM) of the Mongolian business (a joint-venture with a local Mongolian company), working with a leadership team that consists of Mongolians, Russians, Dutch, and Singaporeans and reporting to a British boss. He often needs to interact with his peers running other operating companies or functions in the region and these colleagues are from all over the world. For example, the head of HR is Taiwanese, the head of finance is Dutch and the head of learning and development is from New Zealand. When SG5 left to take up a new role in another country he was replaced by a GM from Mexico.

Many coaches recognise that the consideration of cultural factors has a part to play in their coaching effectiveness, but there are few tools and guidelines available to assist them in integrating these considerations into their practice.

Culture is defined as learned perspectives that are unique to a particular culture (Pedersen 1991) and as a set of beliefs, values and behaviours which together form a set of social norms that are passed from generation to generation (Chung and

Bernak 2002). Culture serves two primary functions for a social group. Firstly, to integrate individuals into the group by a defining purpose in life and providing a sense of identity and self-worth. Secondly, culture sets out the rules for behaviour that enable the group to survive in their environment. These rules enable interaction between members of the group. In a different context, such as another social group, the same rules and behaviours can be misinterpreted or regarded as maladaptive (Chung and Bernak 2002).

A second concept to consider in a cross-cultural context is that of worldview. A worldview is a learned way an individual views their relationship to the world and shapes how they perceive and respond to others. It is not only attitudes and beliefs, but also how an individual thinks, makes decisions, behaves, defines and interprets events (Sue & Sue 1990).

While an individual's worldview is formed out of personal experience with the members of their primary culture, all individuals have unique personal experiences founded in their particular family setting, personal attributes and life experiences, which also impact the development of their worldview (Trevino 1996). Worldviews are neither singular nor static, but are organised into systems of thought that are dynamic and interrelated with specific worldviews falling within a larger domain of general worldviews (Kearney 1984). For example, the general domain of interpersonal relationships will include specific views about marriage, friendships, work relationships and so on. If an individual has a hierarchical view of relationships in general, specific relationships such as a work relationship or a social friendship will be conceptualised according to this hierarchical view leading to specific behaviours and patterns of interaction (Trevino 1996).

As worldview is considered dynamic and therefore open to change, worldview of executives who work transnationally can be shaped by their experiences of working and living in different cultures (Biniecki & Conceicao 2014). Executives who live and work in multiple countries begin to develop a transnational identity, seeing themselves as cosmopolitan global citizens. Interactions with people from different cultures and with different worldviews may stimulate an executive to re-consider elements of their worldview and identity (Butcher 2009). In one study, Colic-Peisker (2010) found that individuals working in another country connected more to their professional identity rather than their nation-state identity. Long-term employees of major multinationals

this may identify more with the company culture and norms than their original national identity. However, the extent to which this may happen is likely mediated by other factors of the individual such as personality factors, experience, openness to learning and length of time overseas.

For executive coaches who are coaching cross-culturally, it is important to consider both culture and worldview. An understanding of cultural norms is a useful starting point and the typological models, such as that developed by Hofstede (2001), that define cultural dimensions such as individualism vs. collectivism are useful to develop hypotheses about how an individual may see the world. However, coaches should be wary of making assumptions based on national culture given that international executives may have developed a worldview distinct from the culture of their country of origin.

One tool that is useful in considering both culture and worldview is the cultural orientations framework (Rosinski 2010), which integrates the work of other cross-cultural experts, anthropologists and communication experts. Rosinski (2010) defines a cultural orientation as “an inclination to think, feel, or act in a way that is culturally determined, or at least influenced by culture”. Rosinski (2010) also argues that cultural orientations are not black and white but should be seen on a continuum. For example, individuals are not always indirect communicators, but based on their experiences and professional company culture may adopt a direct communication style over time or in certain circumstances. Rosinski (2010) has developed a tool for assessing cultural profiles that can be useful in coaching. However, he recognises that cultural orientations are dependent on context and are likely to change. Therefore, they should only be considered to represent an overall tendency.

The cultural orientations framework provides a useful framework for identifying the elements that a coach could consider in working in a cross-cultural assignment. The categories and dimensions that are included in the cultural orientations framework are displayed in table 24 below.

Category	Cultural dimensions
Sense of power and responsibility	Orientation towards control, harmony and humility.
Time management approaches	Time viewed as scarce/plentiful. One activity or relationship at a time or multiple. Attitudes towards past, present and future.
Definitions of identity and purpose	Orientation towards being and/or doing. Individualistic or collectivistic.
Organisational arrangements	Hierarchy or equality. Universalist – all cases treated in a universal manner or, particularistic – emphasise particular circumstances. Competitive or collaborative.
Notions of territory and boundaries	Protective (mental, physical boundaries) or sharing.
Communication patterns	High context or low context. Direct or indirect. Affective or neutral. Formal or informal.
Modes of thinking	Deductive or inductive. Analytical or systemic.

Table 24 Cultural Orientations Framework Rosinski 2010

The cross-cultural elements of a coaching assignment are likely to be multi-layered and will impact an assignment in a number of ways, starting with the cultural orientations of the coach and coachee themselves. Cultural dimensions will also impact the content, goals and process of the coaching assignment. For example, a goal of developing leadership effectiveness will be significantly affected by not only the individual's worldview on relationships and leadership, but the leadership culture of the organisation, the cultural orientations of the employees and broader social norms.

Navigating this cross-cultural complexity requires a high-level of awareness of the coach's own cultural orientations and the ability to respond empathetically to individuals from other cultures. The concept of cultural empathy found in the counselling literature is highly applicable to coaching in this regard. Cultural empathy builds on the traditional understanding of empathy and extends it to communicating an understanding of the client's worldview and acknowledging the cultural differences between counsellor and client, or coach and participant (Chung & Bernak 2002). The coach needs to understand the potential similarities and differences, communicate their understanding with an attitude of concern and do this in a way that is interpersonally appropriate to that individual (Ridley & Lingle 1996). This is where the cultural typology models might be helpful but they should not be applied blindly to every coaching participant as cultural misunderstandings occur in part because these textbook cultural norms are applied indiscriminately (Ridley & Lingle 1996).

For a coach, the first step in developing cultural empathy is developing an understanding of their own worldviews and cultural orientations. This will enable them to understand the likely similarities and differences to their coaching participants and therefore, how they may need to adapt their style to suit the specific situation. Developing this awareness will also assist them in evaluating where the coach's view might provide a useful alternative perspective as well as where their values and worldview may be challenged by working with this specific participant.

Cultural empathy must also take into consideration the cultural context of the issue that is being discussed. The same problem presented in two different cultures will warrant different culturally specific approaches (Chung and Bernak 2002). Coaching itself is an example of this as the concept of coaching will mean different things in different cultural contexts. Coaches need to be aware that how they practice coaching comes from a specific worldview and may be perceived differently from people from different cultures and worldviews.

My own experience of coaching in Singapore is an illustration of this. In local Singaporean companies, coaching is less well understood than in Western organisations or Western multinationals operating in Asia. The direct translation from Chinese is close in meaning to teaching and training and so this affects the expectations of the participants, who perhaps expect what Westerners would consider mentoring (Law, Laulusa & Cheng 2009). This requires me to spend time

exploring the expectations and perceptions of coaching and consequently adapting my style in the initial stages of the coaching to better fit their expectations. The advice is to be educational but not lecturing (Law et al. 2009) and my adaptation to this approach is recognised by several of the coachees, (which they identify as providing input), such as SG5 and his example of how I provided relevant resources.

Applying the PAIR framework in cross-cultural coaching

Cross-cultural elements add more complexity to a coaching assignment and as with other forms of complex cases, the PAIR framework can be a useful tool. All spaces of the PAIR framework have a role to play in supporting coaching effectiveness in cross-cultural coaching. The purpose of the coaching will need to be considered in the context of the culture of the organisation as well as the cultural orientations and worldviews of the key stakeholders and the individual. Aligning stakeholder views will become more important than ever, and the coach can play an important role in bringing the differences in culture and worldview to awareness during the discussion of the coaching purpose.

The CR approach to developing the account already considers elements of culture and worldview within the domains of both the individual and social realm. If culture and worldview dimensions are considered effectively in the account, this will flow into the interventions and interactions, assisting the coach to conduct the assignment in a way that is appropriate for this individual in their context. The cultural orientations framework (Rosinski 2010) or other typologies of culture can be a useful way of identifying more specifically the dimensions to consider in terms of social norms, company culture and individual orientations. These dimensions can then be integrated back into the overall account as elements that may interact with other factors such as personality, experiences, relationships and motivations to form the overall account.

An example of how the cultural dimensions can be integrated into an account can be seen in the document CF2 that is included in Appendix 2. There are differences in worldview between CF2, her peers and others in the organisation. Although Singaporean, CF2 has lived and worked in mainland China and was also a journalist in the past, requiring extensive travel. Consequently, her worldview is different to that of many of her mainly Singaporean peers. The culture of the organisation is changing but is still largely hierarchical, protective, and with a preference for indirect

communication being the norm. How these cultural factors interact with other factors is explored in the account, rather than considering them in isolation and perhaps over-emphasising the cultural aspects. Given that CF2 is a Singaporean, working in a Singaporean company, it would be easy to assume that cultural elements would not be a factor, but it is clear that some of the challenges she is facing are due to cultural orientations that are exacerbated by personality and other factors. Developing the account and sharing some of the hypotheses with CF2 was a form of coaching intervention and assisted her in seeing some possibilities for change. It enabled us to develop approaches that helped her adapt the way in which she interacted with others.

The reflective space of the PAIR framework is an essential part of being effective in cross-cultural assignments and in the development of cultural empathy. Taking time for reflection will assist the coach in understanding their own cultural orientations and worldview and how this may impact their ability to work effectively with the coachee. In a cross-cultural setting, the reflective questions (p. 173) are helpful in considering cultural differences as part of a structured reflection. Reflecting on how a particular challenge would be viewed in a specific culture and attempting to put yourself in the participant's shoes assists in developing cultural empathy.

The reflective process, both in-action and on-action, are also useful in ensuring that the coaching interventions are appropriate to the culture and not an automatic response based on previous experience and training. For example, individualistic goals about personal success are much less likely to be motivating for coachees with a more collectivist cultural orientation, where their goal may be providing for their family or living up to the expectations of their family. This particular example can be seen in the case formulation for CF2 in appendix 2. The coachee in this case is only interested in taking a promotion, if it is offered, so that she will be able to provide for her extended family, rather than for the sense of achievement or status.

I used reflective processes to consider some of the challenges of adapting my communication style to cross-cultural settings. I have an orientation towards direct, low-context communication and favour informality and an affective style of communication that conveys emotion and warmth. For some coachees this would seem overly friendly, assertive or even aggressive and inappropriate. In addition, I often provide feedback as part of a coaching programme. Given that one of the goals

of communication in an Asian context is to preserve harmony (Law, et al. 2009) this preference may not be conducive with providing or receiving direct feedback. Another challenge I found in the coaching interactions was how I asked questions. Sometimes asking questions was perceived as a criticism, which had the potential for participants to feel that they were 'losing face'; their expectation may have been that I was seeking a predetermined answer or that there was a 'right' answer.

My experience in applying the PAIR framework in the multicultural setting of Singapore illustrates some of the challenges of working in this environment, as well as how the PAIR framework supported me in my ability to adapt to cross-cultural coaching. Culture and worldview are aspects of the complexity of coaching assignments, along with many other factors. The PAIR framework can be helpful in assisting a coach to develop a more nuanced coaching approach to suit the individual context, rather than to simply apply a coaching model developed in a specific cultural context.

Mechanisms of cross-cultural coaching

Given the cultural differences between cohorts one and two, it is interesting that there was only one specific mechanism that was identified in one cohort and not the other. As mentioned in section 6.7.2, the coaching relationship was not mentioned as one of the mechanisms by the coachees in cohort two. Most advice on working in Asia emphasises the importance of the relationship (Law et al. 2009) and so this is surprising. One possible explanation is that in Chinese culture, relationships are formed over a long period of time, particularly with those from outside their immediate social network (Bains 2015). In the case of these short coaching assignments it is possible that they do perceive it as a relationship. With very limited research in the coaching field in Asia there is little to draw on to understand this finding and this highlights the importance of conducting additional research outside Western societies.

Only one participant mentioned the cultural differences as a potentially blocking mechanism of the coaching effectiveness, but this does not mean that it did not exist in other cases. There is potentially some effect on the outcomes of the coaching in the second cohort and raises the question of whether a coach from a similar cultural background using the framework would achieve similar or different results. I felt that the use of the PAIR framework was certainly helpful in navigating the cultural

differences but additional research of other coaches from different backgrounds would be useful.

6.7.4 Measuring outcomes

One of the first challenges in completing the research project was establishing appropriate outcome measures as a means to evaluate coaching effectiveness.

The LVI (Leadership Versatility Index) 360° instrument was selected as an instrument as it measured some behaviours that were represented in the Navigator framework along with a rating of the leader's effectiveness. The LVI was supplemented with data from interviews, session notes and recordings and the learning journals. However, many of the measures are subjective and there was no measure of the impact of the changes on company performance. This highlights one of the current challenges in conducting research in executive coaching as there are few instruments that have sound psychometric properties, and instruments that are evidence-based are often more suited to a clinical population. Adding in the cross-cultural dimension makes measuring outcomes even more challenging as most psychometric instruments are developed in Western cultures and may not be reliable in other cultures. This may be the case with the LVI as although the norm group data does contain Asian leaders, the premise and model of leadership effectiveness is based on a Western concept of what makes an effective leader.

As part of phase one, a framework of the capabilities, traits, states and other elements that may enable an executive to navigate complexity was developed. This framework, which was named the Navigator framework, was derived from the literature and it remains a theoretical framework and therefore lacks any specific evidence-based measures of the identified factors. Therefore, research into the Navigator framework factors and the development of related measures would be beneficial. Research that could identify if specific elements of the Navigator framework are more important than others and in which context is needed. Elements may be precursors to other capabilities and it would be useful to understand these links in more detail. For example, tolerance of ambiguity would be a factor that may act as an enabling or blocking mechanism in several of the other capabilities such as stimulating creativity and innovation. Research that identified some of these interactions would be useful in prioritising the focus of leadership development programmes or coaching engagements.

Measuring the increased effectiveness of the coach is also challenging. The primary measure used for this study was the SCTi-MAP (Cook-Greuter) based on the theory that increased complexity of mind would lead to increased coaching effectiveness. However, there is no specific research that has identified this link, although there is a link in the literature between later stage action-logic and the ability to lead transformational change (Rooke & Torbert 2005). Additional research that investigates a link to coaching effectiveness would be useful.

Another approach to measuring coaching effectiveness in complex cases could be based on the Navigator framework. While this framework was developed for executives dealing with complexity, it could be argued that many of these capabilities would also apply to executive coaches. There has been little research conducted that identifies the capabilities for increased coaching effectiveness and further research could be conducted that related the Navigator framework to coaching effectiveness and identified the mechanisms for developing these capabilities. This would provide a much needed framework of advanced coaching capability.

6.7.5 The PAIR framework and coach development

The coach case study identified that the completion of the research project was developmental for me as a coach and six mechanisms were identified. It is unrealistic to expect all coaches to undertake a full research project, however the six mechanisms of development can be considered in developing coach training and ongoing professional development. The PAIR framework itself includes elements that would encourage the development of the coach as well as their coaching capability. For example, in developing an account a coach would be encouraged to reflect on their perspectives, and review and integrate theories and interventions that might be useful.

It is clear from the coach case study that reflective processes were one of the key mechanisms, highlighting the importance of developing this capability and of the importance of professional supervision. Reflection requires structure and practice and by making reflection an explicit element of the approach, the PAIR framework encourages the discipline of ongoing reflective practice and makes it a framework that supports ongoing development.

6.7.6 *RE methodology reflections*

One of the main claims for the RE approach is that it identifies not just the outcomes from the coaching programme but what made it effective for the different participants in their specific contexts. Using the RE methodology did bring to light some useful data regarding mechanism and context factors. This concept is particularly useful for practitioners wanting to understand what it is about their programme that works.

One of the challenges for using this approach was that there was very little existing research on which to draw and guidance on how to proceed. Therefore, I was experimenting with the methods as the research progressed. Working out how and when to develop implementation theory, how to define and identify mechanisms, context factors and the interactions between them were all elements that I needed to experiment with. This experience is consistent with the findings of Marchal et al. (2012) in their review of RE research in the health scientist field.

Despite these challenges, I believe that developing the RE approach for future research in the coaching field would be useful. In most coaching studies there is little that considers the context factors in terms of the coach, coachee and the environment, and RE has potential as a useful methodology to explore these factors. There are increasing amounts of research using this approach in other fields such as health sciences on which researchers could draw (Marchal et al. 2013; Porter 2015).

There are a number of ways in which the RE methodology could be adapted. For example, one of the other claims of CR research is that it takes into consideration human agency. The ability to choose to act is an element that is clearly important in executive coaching as whether an executive chooses to take action will have a significant effect on the coaching outcomes. The RE format of CMO configurations does not provide a view of the role of agency in the outcomes, subsuming agency into the mechanism (Porter 2015). To address this, Porter (2015) recommends agency should be an additional factor in the equation along with context and mechanism.

Porter (2015) also recommends that three different methodological approaches could be used for investigating an intervention; one that investigated the outcomes, one designed to identify mechanisms within the intervention and the context in which it operates, and a third that explored the experiences, and responses of those involved.

Reviewing my methodology from this perspective, there are elements of three methodological approaches. The LVI was used to measure outcomes, the learning journal and interview to investigate the experiences of the coachee, and my own learning journal to investigate my experience. The interviews, coaching notes and session reflections were used to investigate mechanisms. However, having this structure in mind would have been of assistance in designing the research.

6.7.7 Other limitations

As discussed above, one of the challenges in measuring the outcomes is the lack of well-validated measures for executive coaching and specifically for the ability to navigate complexity. While the LVI has relatively strong psychometric properties, the study relied on self-reporting by the participants, my own notes and reflections, and the post-programme interview with the manager to identify the other outcomes and is therefore subject to biases, perspectives and assumptions.

The same concern applies when investigating the mechanisms of the coaching. This relied on the coachee's memory of what worked for them and their ability to reflect on the coaching process, and articulate their reflections. There was considerable variety in this ability, particularly in cohort two. My own coaching notes and experiences were useful to supplement the data but were subject to my own recall errors and biases. Given the reliance on the interview data, a modification I would make is to ask for some reflections on the coaching at the end of each session. The learning journal was supposed to capture these reflections but many of the participants did not complete the post-session reflections.

Similar challenges apply to the coach case study. In this case there were no objective measures of my coaching effectiveness. While I feel that I am being more effective in dealing with complex coaching assignments, the study relied entirely on my reflections and experiences. Reviewing my learning journal provided the supporting evidence of changes in thinking and awareness but this relied on the regular updating of the learning journal and my ability to reflect and articulate my thoughts.

6.8 Summary

As an initial study into CF and executive coaching this project is a useful contribution to the coaching field. The programme and implementation theory form a starting point for future research and point to useful avenues for further investigation. This project also provides an example of how an RE methodology may be applied to coaching

research and how some of the challenges of applying this approach may be overcome. The study demonstrates that the PAIR framework is flexible and adaptable and can be used in many complex contexts, including that of cross-cultural coaching.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to increase effectiveness of coaching engagements that involved developing a leader and their ability to navigate complexity. In reviewing the literature, it was concluded that developing leaders and their leadership capability was itself a complex endeavour and therefore a simple approach based on one perspective would not match the complexity of the task. Instead an approach was developed that considered multiple perspectives based on the application of a CF approach to executive coaching and this is represented by the PAIR framework, which is the primary outcome from this project.

7.1 *The PAIR Coaching Framework*

The first aim of the research was to develop a coaching framework that could be applied in complex coaching assignments and evaluate what happened when the coaching framework was used.

Given the argument that complex cases require an individualised approach to developing leaders and their leadership capability, the coaching framework needed to support a coach in designing an individualised coaching programme. An application of CF to coaching was selected as the approach and initial programme and implementation theory was developed that would be evaluated through the outcome study.

7.1.1 *Revised programme and implementation theories*

The initial programme theory proposed that in complex executive coaching cases, such as developing leadership capabilities to navigate complexity (context), a coaching framework using CF that is applied by an experienced coach to design a programme to meet the individual's needs in their context (mechanism), will enable positive changes in an executive's capability and achievement of the agreed purpose of the coaching (outcome) (CMO1).

Despite the challenges of measuring the outcomes of executive coaching there was an identifiable pattern of outcomes such as an increase in leadership capabilities or an increase in the perceptions of leadership effectiveness, as measured by the LVI. There were also tangible outcomes such as the successful completion of projects and achieving promotions or permanent appointments, as well as the participants

identifying that the coaching purpose had been achieved. This pattern of data from the outcome study supports the initial programme theory.

Through applying the CF approach, it was identified that the coaching framework needed to include more than just the coaching account and reflect the other mechanisms involved. This led to the development of the PAIR framework and therefore an updated programme theory (CMO1a):

#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
1a	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	An experienced and trained coach using the PAIR framework to design and apply an evidence-based coaching programme to meet the individual's needs.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased effectiveness in leading in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.

Table 25 Revised programme theory

The initial implementation theory (CMO#2 to 9) represented the application of a CF approach to executive coaching based on the PPP framework (Corrie & Lane 2010). In general, this implementation theory is supported by the data from the outcome study and was used to develop the PAIR framework.

One significant element of the PAIR framework not documented in the initial implementation theory is the use of the CR framework to integrate the different perspectives to develop the account and the resulting coaching programme. The initial CMO#5 refers to using multiple perspectives and therefore I propose an updated version of this CMO configuration:

#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
5a	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	An account that considers multiple perspectives <i>integrated within the CR framework</i> provides multiple possibilities for change <i>and forms the basis of the individual programme</i> .	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased effectiveness in leading in the coachee's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.

Table 26 Revised CMO 5

Through the outcome study data analysis, additional CMO configurations were identified (CMO#10 to 21 section 6.5.1), which represented mechanisms and context factors that appeared in the case study data. These CMO configurations expand the implementation theory to include more specific theories about what might work for which people and in what circumstances that can inform future directions for research and practice.

Another element of the PAIR framework that is not represented in the initial implementation theory is that of reflective practice. Reflective processes became a key part of how the CF approach was implemented and led to increased coach capability and coaching effectiveness. It is therefore proposed that an additional CMO configuration be added to the implementation theory:

#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
22	Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	Coaches engaging in reflective practice increases coaching effectiveness.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased leadership effectiveness and ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose met.

Table 27 Reflective practice CMO configuration

Given the support found in the outcome study data for the programme and implementation theory, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- That a CF approach can be applied in complex executive coaching cases and leads to positive outcomes for the coachees.

- The PAIR framework assists a coach in applying a CF approach to executive coaching.
- Using the PAIR framework supports the coach in developing an individualised coaching programme for each coachee in their context.

7.1.2 Cross-cultural coaching

The project also provided the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of using the PAIR framework in the context of cross-cultural coaching. The outcomes of the case studies in cohort two demonstrate that the use of a CF approach based on the PAIR framework can be useful in supporting a coach in navigating the complexity of cross-cultural assignments. Cultural dimensions can be integrated into the account along with other factors. This supports the coach in considering culture and worldview but without it becoming over-emphasised to the exclusion of other factors which are of equal importance to a specific assignment.

This approach is consistent with transdisciplinary approaches that seek to identify and articulate multiple worldviews. The PAIR framework assists the coach and coachee in identifying the worldviews and cultural dimensions that are part of the context of the coaching. This approach also recognises that the cultural or worldview dimensions are one dimension of the coaching but that there are many elements involved and a transdisciplinary approach seeks to identify and integrate these into the coaching approach.

A further CMO configuration is proposed to include application of the PAIR framework specifically in cross-cultural contexts.

#	Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
23	Executive coaching In organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved including dimensions of cross-cultural leadership. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects. Coach and coachee different cultural orientations.	An experienced and trained coach using the PAIR framework facilitates integration of cultural and worldview dimensions into the coaching programme, supports the coach in developing cultural empathy.	Changes in coachee thinking and behaving. Increased leadership effectiveness and ability to navigate complexity, including the cross-cultural dimensions of leadership. Coaching purpose met.

Table 28 Cross-cultural coaching CMO configuration

7.1.3 Recommendations for executive coaching practice

It is not known how widely CF is practised in executive coaching. Given the lack of research and that CF training is not currently part of most coach development programmes, it is unlikely to be widely practised. This project indicates that it is a useful approach in dealing with complex cases and therefore it is a skill that executive coaches should consider developing.

The PAIR framework provides a starting point for understanding how to apply CF to executive coaching and could be adopted by other coaches, although there are a few considerations. My approach to developing the account is based on a CR and systems perspective. Other coaches may have a different perspective and therefore they would need to develop their own approach to developing the account that is consistent with that perspective. The benefit of the PAIR framework is that it can accommodate these different perspectives within the framework even if a different approach to developing the account is adopted.

Given that the PAIR framework is not a step-by-step guide to the specific coaching process it is more suited to experienced coaches. Coaches who have realised the limits of their current approach and are looking for a framework for ongoing professional development can use the PAIR framework to not only increase their coaching effectiveness but also as way of integrating different approaches into their practice.

7.1.4 Recommendations for future executive coaching and CF research

The programme and implementation theory outlined in this project should be considered the best knowledge we have at this time about how a CF approach to executive coaching may operate. There are many ways in which this theory can be evaluated and expanded in future research. For example, research could investigate or evaluate different approaches to developing the account, such as a bottom-up vs. a top-down approach. Understanding the key components of the account and how to evaluate account quality is another avenue of potential investigation. Comparing an approach using the PAIR framework with another approach would also be a useful study.

7.2 *Coach Development*

It is not realistic to expect all coaches to complete a research project, however all of the mechanisms of development are readily available to practising coaches. Expanding knowledge through reading and attending courses, supervision, journaling or other writing activities, and experiential learning can all be made part of a coach's ongoing development.

Given the complexity of cases that executive coaches are dealing with, using the concept of action-logic to evaluate if their current complexity of mind matches the complexity of the task of developing leaders would also be a useful way of establishing their own development needs and measuring their progress.

7.2.1 *Recommendations for executive coach development*

As practising executive coaches, each coach should have their own development plan in the same way that many of the executives with whom they work do. As a coach gains experience, both horizontal and vertical development may be required. Measuring current action-logic is one way in which a coach could understand their own current complexity of mind and use this information for assessing and measuring the effect of vertical development.

The six mechanisms of coach development identified in this study are all available to coaches and individual coaches should establish which combination of mechanisms will work best for them in their contexts. Reflective practice and supervision are recommended for all coaches, although the most appropriate form of supervision and supervisor background will vary based on the individual's needs and context.

In terms of training coaches, the skills of developing coaching accounts and reflective practice are both areas that would be useful to include in coach training programmes, particularly those aimed at more experienced coaches who are looking to build their capability.

7.2.2 *Recommendations for executive coach development research*

There has been little research so far on the effective development of executive coaching capabilities. The Navigator framework could form the starting point for future research into the capabilities needed such as establishing if these capabilities are linked to coaching effectiveness.

Another avenue for future research is to investigate possible links between action-logic and coaching effectiveness. Research in the leadership field has demonstrated a pattern between later stage action-logics and the ability to lead transformational change, and it is possible that the same may apply to executive coaches.

7.3 Developing Leaders to Navigate Complexity

As a secondary outcome from this project, the Navigator framework represents an initial framework of capabilities, traits and states in interpersonal and intrapersonal domains. However, for each person there will be a network of interacting factors unique to their context. While the Navigator framework provides a guiding framework for the factors involved, each individual's context is different and therefore the combination of capabilities needed by each leader may be substantially or subtly different, requiring an individualised approach to leadership development. The pattern of capabilities represented by the Navigator framework can be considered a starting point for understanding what is required but should be adapted to suit each context.

7.3.1 Recommendations for leadership development practice

Coaches and others working in leadership development should consider the leader in their context, designing an individualised approach to each executive's development. Even if executives are participating in a leadership programme, each person should be considered unique and an individual picture of what is required for this leader to effectively navigate their complex environment should be developed. Individual development plans that are often part of leadership programmes are one way of achieving this but in my experience, executives need assistance in writing a meaningful development plan.

7.3.2 Recommendations for future leadership development research

Much of the research in leadership development considers only one perspective and attempts to simplify the process to one or two key elements. Research that identifies which capabilities for which people in which contexts would provide greater insight for those involved in leadership development. Research of this nature would assist in prioritising the capabilities that executives should focus on and assist them in selecting the most appropriate approaches.

The lack of well validated instruments for use in leadership development and executive coaching is also an area that requires greater research. Many instruments for measuring psychological constructs are developed for clinical populations and some instruments designed for non-clinical populations would be helpful in measuring the effectiveness of leadership development initiatives.

7.4 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this project was to increase coaching effectiveness in more complex engagements, such as developing an executive's ability to navigate complexity. The purpose was not only to improve my own ability to work effectively with these assignments but to also add to the knowledge base in the coaching industry in terms of the findings from this project and making recommendations for future research, coaching practice and coach development and training.

Turning first to my own coaching effectiveness and reflecting on the differences between my coaching practice now and at the start of the project, there is a substantial difference in how I approach complex coaching assignments. I have adopted the PAIR coaching framework as the foundation of my practice and I find it has supported my effectiveness in a number of ways. I find that using the PAIR framework supports my ability to consider the multiple interacting factors at the individual, organisational and social levels. It encourages me to think broadly and work with the coachee to develop an approach to meet their circumstances. Being based in Singapore and coaching across the region, using the framework helps me manage some of the potential difficulties in cross-cultural coaching and also assists me in helping my coachees think about the issues of leading cross-cultural teams. Having the structure of the PAIR framework has increased my confidence in dealing with these more complex cases.

My ability to reflect both in sessions and after sessions has greatly improved and the PAIR framework encourages the discipline to continue to do this. My coaching notes include a section for post-session reflection in addition to the account structure that I have developed and use in my case files.

If I wish to introduce another perspective or revise a particular theory and its application to a coaching engagement, I find the process of developing a detailed

account based on that perspective or theory a very useful way of expanding my knowledge. This was the initial way in which I developed the case formulations, a top-down approach.

Outside of specific coaching practice, completing the research has extended my understanding and approach to leadership development. I have developed an understanding of what might be required to effectively navigate complexity but also what might be involved in developing these capabilities. This has assisted me in developing leadership development programmes and advising my organisational clients on appropriate approaches to executive development.

These reflections represent my subjective assessment of my increased coaching effectiveness but they are supported by feedback from my coachees, the increasing number of referrals I receive and the perceived reputation of MB Consulting in Singapore.

In the four years of completing this programme, the world has certainly not become less complex and so I see that this work can make a contribution to the executive coaching field more broadly. I intend to continue to refine the PAIR framework and identify ways in which I can disseminate my findings. It is my intention to develop a book and some workshops for coaches based on my research along with other academic articles and I see this as the next stage for my project. I also intend to complete additional research projects.

I have already presented some of my initial findings at the 4th International Congress of Coaching Psychology in London in December 2014 and will identify other similar opportunities. I have presented the PAIR framework and my initial findings to the six coaches that work for MB Consulting in Singapore and plan to pilot a workshop with them during 2015.

Having completed this project, I do not see that this is the end of the process of increasing my coaching effectiveness, but that there are many more possibilities and avenues to explore.

Word count 70,514

8 Reflective Account

The coach case study identifies key outcomes and mechanisms of my professional development. This reflective account supplements the case study with reflections on my learning through the experience and completing the doctor of professional studies and the effect on my personal and professional development. I also consider how this development will influence my future professional opportunities and how I plan to continue building on this work. The significant learning outcomes were largely gained through overcoming the challenges that arose during the research project. I have constructed these reflections based around these key challenges and what I learned from them.

In the coach case study in section 6.6, I discussed the learning and knowledge gained in research methodology and methods. In addition to gaining this knowledge, the experience of dealing with the following challenges provided some opportunities for personal and professional development. One of the first challenges that I had to overcome was the potential scope of the literature that I needed to review and integrate from multiple perspectives. I first needed to select the appropriate literature and the process of identifying and analysing the literature has increased my critical thinking skills. I adopt a more critical stance to the literature and I have a greater knowledge of what constitutes robust research. I am more aware of how the researchers' perspectives may have influenced their approach and how they interpret their results.

I enjoyed reading the selected literature and becoming immersed in the topic. The difficulty came in trying to filter the data and come up with what this literature meant for my project. Through this project I have come to realise where my strengths and growth opportunities lie in this regard. I now recognise that I am a conceptual thinker and that I can pull together various perspectives and integrate them in my mind. I can find it more difficult to articulate these ideas and communicate them in writing. I am much more comfortable in presenting the ideas and discussing them. Through the process of completing the research project I have developed some techniques for helping me communicate my ideas more effectively. I developed the method of using flip-charts and post-it notes that is described in section 4 of this document. This process would also help me see patterns and themes from which I could develop a framework, or to see how these themes would fit into an existing framework. An

example of this is how I pulled together the different perspectives from the literature into a framework based on a critical realist perspective.

I have adopted this approach in other aspects of my professional work, such as conceptualising a complex leadership development programme for a client. I will use the same process to group the key themes of a programme together and then integrate them into a framework that shows how the pieces will integrate to form the overall programme.

Adopting a research methodology based on realistic evaluation presented a host of challenges. The main way in which I overcame this challenge was again to draw on a framework to provide structure. At an emotional and motivational level there were other learning outcomes. I became more confident that I could work my way through a complex project even without any guidelines on what to do next. By breaking down the project and tackling the complexity in small sections and creating my own frameworks and processes, I became confident that I could complete the project. There were times when it seemed overwhelming and at that stage I would identify one thing that I could do to keep the project on track. This has become another useful approach that I apply when dealing with large projects at work or other complex situations such as dealing with my elderly mother's care from a distance.

As with any major project, not all elements went according to plan. In the case of this project, small changes had implications for how the project would proceed and for the outcomes. Conducting research in real-world settings introduces many uncertainties, such as the lack of adoption of the participants' learning journals, which had implications for my later data analysis. There were challenges of fitting the coaching into the executives' schedules, completing the post-programme measures when participants had moved countries or jobs, and then making sense of sometimes contradictory results from the outcomes measures.

Dealing with these challenges meant I needed to be adaptable and flexible; shifting priorities and plans and adapting to the circumstances as they arose. I became less attached to following an exact process and adapted programmes and approaches where needed, while still preserving the integrity of the project and ethical research and coaching practices.

Completing the research took much longer than I anticipated, largely due to moving countries and starting a new business in the middle of the project. I learned to be less attached to self-imposed goals and timelines and to take a longer-term view of the project as well as professional goals. This contributed to some of the changes in my SCTi-MAP profile as I learned to temper some of the drive of the *achiever* action-logic and focus on the experience as much as the outcome. On reflection, I can see the benefits of taking more time and how this has contributed to the quality of the project. The additional time has allowed ideas to develop, for deeper exploration of concepts, and for re-visiting sections of the thesis as these ideas evolved.

Reflecting on how my learning progressed through the project I have gained greater insight into how ideas develop and knowledge is generated. In re-reading the learning journal it was interesting to find the seeds of ideas quite early in the journal and to note how they developed as time progressed. I also experienced how ideas and concepts in the literature that I initially found hard to understand became clear when re-read at a later date or as I put an idea into practice. There were many times when I could sense an idea germinating and struggle to be able to bring it to fruition, only to find it emerge fully formed at some later stage.

These experiences have led to a revised perspective on how knowledge is generated. In the past, I viewed knowledge generation as a formal and academic process and one in which I might eventually arrive at the 'right' answer. However, I now see it as an iterative cycle with theory and academic knowledge informing practice but also the reverse being true; that knowledge also comes from practice. This practitioner knowledge can inform theory that can be investigated through future formal research. I developed the PAIR framework based on the theory of case formulation but also through experimentation with formulation, researching the outcomes, and reflecting on my experiences. This process presents its own challenges and a recognition that the learning will never be complete. There is no one perfect coaching assignment or framework and all that we can do is to focus on doing the best we can with our current skills, tools, frameworks and thinking and remain committed to ongoing research, along with personal and professional development.

The move to Singapore brought with it many challenges for the project as well as for my professional career. I was faced with recruiting a new cohort of participants in an environment where I had few contacts. I am an effective networker and able to

develop social relationships quickly and this was a strength I drew on to assist me in becoming established in Singapore. I was very fortunate to make a few significant contacts early in my time in Singapore and these contacts introduced me to organisations that were able to provide me with potential participants.

Coaching in a different cultural context was another challenge I needed to overcome and there were times when I felt that I was not as competent a coach as I was in Australia. It has been helpful to set the challenge of cross-cultural coaching in the context of transdisciplinary ideas. The typological approach of Hofstede (2001) attempts to reduce the cultural differences to a set of dimensions on which people vary. However, I see this as only one perspective on individual difference and one that can over-emphasise cultural elements and under-value other perspectives on individual differences. The transdisciplinary approach of identifying and articulating the different worldviews considers much more than the just the cultural elements of what constitutes an individual's worldview. Transdisciplinarity recognises that complex problems contain multiple worldviews and a transdisciplinary practitioner aims to make these multiple views transparent while respecting all views.

While I have used the term cross-cultural in this document, in thinking about this challenge in the context of transdisciplinarity, I have become aware that this term frames the issue in a way that emphasises the barriers between cultures. It implies that these barriers need to be crossed if coaching is to be effective. Adopting a different term would encourage a different way of seeing the problem. Transcultural is a term that perhaps frames the issue in a way that is more appropriate in the context of coaching in today's globalised business environment. This implies moving beyond or through the cultural differences to create an enriched understanding that integrates ideas from different cultural perspectives. I intend to continue to develop this idea in future projects and writing.

Taking a transdisciplinary perspective is consistent with the way in which I practise coaching. My aim is that through collaboration and dialogue with my coachees we can create new knowledge that will help navigate the wicked problems that many executives face. This includes the complexity of operating in a globalised business environment. Developing and applying the PAIR framework has supported me to put this approach into practice.

I am more mindful of sharing concepts and theories that are developed from Western perspectives and ensuring that the participant and I discussed the relevance of these to their context. I have developed a greater understanding of my cultural programming and beliefs and how this may affect my ability to coach. The discipline of reflecting on the cases, constructing case formulations and listening to and reflecting on coaching sessions was certainly helpful in helping me adapt to coaching in Asia and I would recommend this as an approach to other coaches who are working in different cultural contexts.

I have come to appreciate that there are many ways in which people from different cultures are similar and have shared values, life experiences and aspirations. In some respects, all people are like all others, in some respects people are like some other people, and in other respects people are unique. One of the privileges of being a coach is being able to experience these aspects of the executives with whom I work. My development and use of the PAIR framework has assisted me in collaborating with my coachees to develop individualised coaching programmes to facilitate their professional and personal growth regardless of their cultural background and worldview. Completing this project has increased my confidence in navigating complex coaching assignments. The PAIR framework provides me with an approach to continue my development, perhaps through integrating new perspectives into my practice or increasing my ability to develop effective accounts to support my coaching.

8.1 Ongoing development and contribution of the research to the coaching industry

It is my intention to take the PAIR framework forward as an approach that can be taught to other coaches as well as continuing its development. I continue to evolve the PAIR framework, such as reviewing the elements included in the account. I am experimenting with ways of representing hypotheses and documenting the account, session notes and reflections. I am also experimenting with how to share my thinking with the coachee or how to use the formation of the account as an intervention in the coaching.

In terms of disseminating the use of the PAIR framework I developed a short workshop that I presented at the 5th European Coaching Psychology conference in London during December 2015. I am now expanding this workshop and plan to offer it to coaches both in the Asia Pacific region and in the UK. The use of the framework

in the cross-cultural context will be very helpful for many coaches working with executives in global multinationals, as well as for those working with other complex coaching cases.

I am also currently developing a book proposal, which will provide a guide to using the PAIR framework. The book will include examples from my research case studies and my experience as an executive coach in the Asia Pacific region. My writing capability has improved as a result of completing the doctor of professional studies programme and continues to develop. It has been very useful to learn what works work for me in the writing process. I learned that in early stages of the writing process, small bursts work well to get some initial ideas on the page. However, at the later stage when the document was beginning to form, I needed much longer blocks of time in order to immerse myself in the document and ensure the ideas and threads of the document were clear and linked. Detailed editing could then be completed in smaller blocks of time. I also learned that stepping away from the computer and writing by hand increased my creative thinking and many sections of this thesis were drafted by hand. These writing skills will continue to develop as I disseminate my work through further writing projects. I have already written and submitted an article in collaboration with my supervisor and we are developing some other article ideas.

Completing this research project has provided me with an interest in conducting further research alongside my practice as an executive coach. I can see multiple opportunities for future research and my experience in the doctor of professional studies has given me the confidence and knowledge to undertake further projects. I can also see ways in which the research methodology that I utilised could be of benefit to the coaching profession. The article written with my supervisor mentioned above, focused on the research methodology and used my project as an example of how it could be applied in the coaching field. I am also experimenting with ways in which the methodology could be adapted so that practitioners can use it to evaluate their own practice, and develop a better understanding of what makes coaching effective for which people in what contexts. Again, this is of greater importance now I am based in Singapore as coaching needs to be adapted to suit the different individuals and their cultural contexts.

Completing this research provided a framework for my overall development and facilitated the linkage between practice and research to increase my knowledge,

coaching capability, and personal development. The completion of the programme has been a major achievement that will provide me with many future opportunities and options for the next phase of my career.

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Appendix 1

Copies of informed consent, coaching protocols and code of ethics.

Executive Coaching in an Era of Complexity

Introduction

This document is the briefing document for executives who are participating in the research project - Enabling leaders to navigate complexity: Executive coaching amid ambiguity, uncertainty and change. This document outlines the key stages of the research project, what you can expect during the research, how the information will be used, and the potential benefits and any risks of participating.

What's involved in the research?

12 executives will be selected to participate in a 6-month coaching programme aimed at developing the ability to effectively navigate complexity. There are three stages to the coaching programme and your participation in the research.

Stage 1 – Pre-programme measures

In order to evaluate the success of the coaching programme initial benchmark information and measures will be taken. This will take the form of:

- An interview with each participant to develop an understanding of current situation and capabilities (90 mins)
- A meeting with current manager to understand current situation, feedback from manager and desired outcomes from the coaching programme (1 hour)
- Completion of Leadership Versatility Index 360 survey. This requires completion by participant, manager and a selected group of peers, senior managers and direct reports. (30 mins per person)
- Two or three other specific questionnaires (1 hour)

Stage 2 – Coaching programme

Executive coaching is defined as a form of individual development where the coach acts as a facilitator of self-directed learning, personal change and development. Executive coaching assists the client in achieving agreed goals to improve work performance and therefore the organisation's effectiveness. Coaching sessions take the form of structured, goal-directed and solution-focussed conversations that generate action and positive change.

The coaching programme will take the form of a monthly coaching session lasting 90 mins to 2 hours. Email and telephone support will be provided as required between sessions. It is expected that a coaching programme will consist of between 6-9 sessions.

As part of the coaching programme you will be asked to maintain a learning journal. This learning journal will form one of the key learning elements of the coaching programme and

will also give insight into the individual learning experiences of the individual participants. Key insights and information from the learning journal will be included in case studies.

Throughout the coaching process the coach will often engage in direct, personal and often challenging conversations. Successful coaching requires an active collaborative approach between the coach and you, the client. The coach plays the role of the facilitator of change and it is your role to enact change.

Time required: 90 mins – 2 hours per month for coaching session, 1-2 hours per week for the learning journal. Other actions and activities may be agreed in coaching sessions.

Stage 3 - Post coaching programme

In order to evaluate the success of the coaching programme the initial benchmark information and measures will be repeated. This will take the form of:

- An interview with each participant to develop an understanding of situation and capabilities following the coaching programme (90 mins)
- A meeting with current manager to understand situation, feedback from manager and outcomes achieved from the coaching programme (1 hour)
- Re-administration of Leadership Versatility Index 360 survey. This requires completion by participant, manager and a selected group of peers, senior managers and direct reports. (30 mins per person)
- Two or three other specific questionnaires (1 hour)

In addition a final questionnaire will be administered that explores the outcomes and experience of the coaching programme (30 mins).

Outcomes from the research project

The research project is designed to meet the following objectives:

- To develop an understanding of what factors assist executives in being more effective in navigating complexity.
- To understand what approaches, models or factors of coaching might be useful in coaching engagements that aim to develop an executive's ability to handle complexity.
- To develop a model/approach to coaching that can be used in coaching engagements that are focused on developing an executive's ability to navigate complexity.
- To understand the experience of the client in coaching engagements where this approach is used.
- To examine the effect of coaching on the expected outcomes when this model or approach is used.

The results from the research will be captured in 12 case studies which outline the client situation, current capabilities and findings from the initial measures. The case study will explore the coaching process, the experience of the client during the coaching, and evaluate the outcomes from the programme. Cross-case analysis between the 12 case studies will be

conducted to summarise the key factors that made the coaching effective and the key outcomes achieved. The research will be written up as a doctoral thesis and submitted for assessment to Middlesex University.

It is also intended that the key findings from the research will be written up for publication in relevant academic and business journals. In addition, it is intended that a book will be produced at a later date and the research outcomes used to inform leadership development programmes and coach education.

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality

In order to protect your privacy and confidentiality no reference to individuals or company names will be made in any notes, research reports or publications. Each participant will be identified by a pseudonym and coded company name. For example a participant at a large bank could be identified by John of FinServ1.

As discussed above, you will keep a learning journal as part of the coaching programme. The information in the learning journal will be shared with the coach only. Only de-identified short extracts will be used to illustrate learning points in any written documents and publications.

Coaching sessions will be recorded to aid in later data analysis. In transcribing these session all identifying information will be deleted and replaced with pseudonyms.

All recordings, notes and data will be kept securely and will not be made available to any other party except in rare circumstances as decreed by law.

Each case study participant will have full access to all the data collected on their case. In addition you will be asked to review the written case study to check that your experiences have been accurately portrayed and that you are comfortable with the information that it contains.

Potential benefits and risks to you and your organisation

Participation in the research programme does not come with any guarantees of benefits to either you or your organisation. However, research indicates that executive coaching can lead to increased individual and organisational performance. In the case of this coaching programme you will specifically have the opportunity to improve your ability to navigate complexity. This could include the following outcomes:

- Improved decision making in the absence of complete information
- Comfort in dealing with ambiguous situations
- Developing more versatility in leadership styles
- Improved self-awareness
- Improved ability to accurately read situations and influence others

There are limited risks associated with your participation in the research programme. The professional standards required of executive coaches to ensure your wellbeing will be

maintained at all times. This includes professional supervision of the coaching both through the University and with a professional coach supervisor. The role of the professional coach supervisor is to ensure that the coaching meets the appropriate standards and is not dealing with issues that are more appropriately handled by other professionals such as psychologists or counsellors.

Coaching is not therapy and so does not attempt to treat psychological problems. If such issues become apparent during the coaching relationship, the coach may recommend a referral to an appropriate and qualified specialist.

Consent

By agreeing to participate in this research you are agreeing to your information being used as described above. You are participating voluntarily in the coaching programme and are free to withdraw at any time. If you withdraw from the research programme your data may still be included in research publications.

I have read and understood the information contained in this briefing document and agree to participate in the research programme. I have gained permission from my manager/my organisation to participate in the research programme.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

**Coaching protocols for coaching services provided by Louise
Kovacs as part of Doctorate Research Project**

Coaching is a structured, goal-directed, solutions-focused conversation that brings about positive change. The coach facilitates the self-directed learning and personal development of the client.

Throughout the coaching process the coach will often engage in direct, personal and often challenging conversations. The client understands that successful coaching requires an active collaborative approach between the coach and the client. The coach plays the role of the facilitator of change and it is the client's role to enact change. Coaching is not therapy and so does not attempt to treat psychological problems. The client agrees to disclose details of past psychological treatment. If such issues become apparent during the coaching relationship, the coach may recommend a referral to an appropriate and qualified specialist.

As your coach I can work with you if:

- You have a genuine and serious intent to change
- You are ready to work at creating change
- You are ready to receive and act on feedback
- You are willing to explore, challenge and change self-defeating patterns
- You are willing to try new ways of behaving, learning and working
- You will raise and frankly discuss any issues that relate to the goals we are working on
- You inform me promptly if coaching is not working for you

Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected as outlined in the briefing document and consent form that you have already signed.

I would be grateful if you could provide at least 48 hours' notice of any cancellation and I will extend the same courtesy to you if at any time I am required to change an appointment. Coaching will be conducted at your offices in a suitable private space. Louise Kovacs will work within the Ethical Code of Association of Coaching.

I have read and understood this document:

Signed

Date

Appendix 2

Examples of coaching accounts

CF1 - example of top-down approach to CF.

CF2 - example CF using the CR framework and a bottom-up approach to CF.

NB: no reference to the participant is included in these examples to ensure confidentiality. They are referred to as CF1 and CF2 rather than the codes used in the main body of this document.

Case Formulation using a Top- Down Approach

Purpose:

CF1 stated goals/purpose

- Broadly talking about improving his performance as a GM
- Outcomes are to successfully lead and deliver some significant projects
- This will involve developing strategy and managing stakeholders through the changes
- If the GM role is to exist in Nov 12 that there is no question that CF1 should get the role
- Broadly CF1s role is not clearly defined in his head. No one sat down with him and really explained what the GM role did so he appears to be making it up as he goes along.

These are important to CF1 because he wants to be successful, enjoys challenges and wants to be financially secure himself.

Stakeholders include his direct manager (CEO), exec committee (peers), direct reports and the board. Largely they would all like to see CF1 succeed (there is a question that he is competing for that GM role with someone who used to do the role and is now doing something else)

They have been involved in the process because they have completed the 360 and will do again at the end of the program. Mgr. involvement may take the form of some other meetings with mgr if desired as part of the process. The Mgr will be happy to be involved.

Clearly in the remit of my coaching services in leadership performance and effectiveness.

Role of the coachee and coach was discussed as part of the protocols document.

1st April

Short term nature of the goals he set are to get his project signed off at the board level seemed to really stand-out in the second session.

28th June – based on thinking about purpose there is definitely some performance related coaching for CF1 as well as some skills work. He has had limited formal development or management education and so knowledge of theories, processes and management systems is limited.

Perspectives

Perspective	Case Formulation from that perspective
Diagnostic	<p>LVI</p> <p>From this perspective CF1 scored below average on the LVI with a score of 79%. He was rated as being effective on average of 7.46 which is consistent with him being below average on the LVI score. At a high level CF1 is doing too little on the empowering leadership style, slightly too much on the forceful. Slightly too much operation and too little strategic.</p> <p>Overall there is much that he can do more of and very few that he needs to do less of. From this perspective he needs to add some more range of behaviours to what he is already doing. What has got him where he is today is good but needs to broaden out his repertoire.</p> <p>Increasing his versatility would lead to an increase in the assessment of his effectiveness in the role which is current below average.</p> <p>It appears from the LVI that the key areas that he is over-using are on the operational level which is perhaps what could be expected from a leader who had come up through the operation. The areas where there are significant room for building more capability are in the areas of strategic leadership – innovation, big picture thinking, taking some risks and questioning the status quo.</p> <p>Is also quite forceful in the way that he deals with some situations and does not back down easily in some situations which is the only area where he could tone down his behaviour.</p> <p>He is seen by some as not making bold enough decisions, being open to more ideas, listening more would give him more options.</p> <p>Team effectiveness scores are close to a high performing team based on his and his team scores however, there is a difference between how his peers and particular his superior have scored the team which is a low vitality and low productivity team (on the border with the average of all).</p>
GF approaches	<p>Goal setting theory – He had some goals around being able to manage change, manage all the stakeholders through the change process, having confidence to say no to timeframes. Being able to delegate and not have to micro manage. How did we get down to such a short term goal?</p> <p>These two goals are aligned vertically as the first would be one step in achieving the second step. These goals are also aligned to his broader purpose and more long-term stated outcomes of being able to continue his career with the organisation, comfortably retire to a home in the country.</p> <p>Pursuing these goals are consistent with SDT – they are self-selected and therefore provide for autonomy, although not entirely intrinsic as there are external rewards linked to the achievement of the goals – financial, status, power. However, they are autonomous in that they are selected by the client although somewhat linked to external processes and controls which could affect the motivational impact of the goals over time as there are many aspects of the achievement of the goal which may be outside the client's control. If it looked likely that he was not going to be confirmed in his GM position then this goal would become de-motivating and irrelevant and would need to be replaced with another goal. This is something to monitor through the coaching process. Pursuing this goal would certainly meet the need for competence – being successful in the role would further meet the need for competence. Relatedness – achieving these goals would mean that there was significant opportunity to relate to others in the organisation, and would meet the need for feeling connected to significant others in the organisation. Not achieving the goal would certainly</p>

challenge all three basic needs. The goals seem sufficiently internalised and connected to other values about meeting challenges, being successful to provide for internal regulation and would appear to be internalised. There does not appear to be any real conflict here to be resolved between the three needs and the internalised nature of the goals.

The initial goals were both proximal in nature and while this stimulates the action planning it is a narrow focus for the coaching. Is the goal of having the role confirmed also constricting in some ways? If all behaviour and planning is based on achieving this goal, will it stimulate the type of thinking and action required of someone in a GM position where the timescales would be further out? While the goal is linked to a more distal vision of a longer term career and therefore set in a broader context there could be some risk in pursuing this goal.

TTM perspective – Well into action stage on both goals. Has done a lot of thinking about it and has already put a lot into action. There are some things that he could do differently, integrating the feedback from the LVI.

Updated on change of goal.

Developed a longer term goal of leaving a legacy whether he continued in his current role, was in another GM level role or even if he wasn't there. This came from discussions about the longer-term aspects of the role and what he was trying to achieve and a shift in mindset about thinking in the context of doing everything to achieve the promotion rather than just making the assumption that it was his and acting on that basis.

The longer term fuzzy vision of leaving a legacy has been refined down to increasing staff engagement, embedding the company core values into the culture. These can be hard to measure and so some measures for some of these will need to be developed in order to monitor progress over time.

From a SDT perspective – these are again supporting the basic needs and are possibly a more intrinsically-motivated goal – one of CF1s values appears to be in relationships and doing the right thing. There is a lot in this goal that is aligned with that.

In order to progress from here more tightly defined goals would be articulated action plans developed and monitored.

From this perspective we have a story where some short term goals have been set and achieved, however there is some risk to the framing of the goal in that it may direct some short term thinking that is counter to the achievement of the goal. If I were to coach purely to this goal there is a risk that it would actually be counter- productive. Short term thinking would replace what is potentially required for a person in a GM level role and if all decisions are evaluated in whether they help achieve that goal or not, decisions could be delayed.

Is this what we are seeing in the LVI – no decisions being made, not being bold enough – is he now afraid to make those decisions because he may not get the role?

Solution-Focused	<p>CF1 is a competent manager who can build on what he is doing well to increase his capability. We are looking for what is currently working – he is working well with most of his team and has good relationships generally across the organisation. He has a good relationship with the CEO and can build on that to assist him to get to his goals. What are the choices he has in the way he now pursues his goals? What resources does he have?</p> <p>CF1 has a number of resources that he can use – his peers and boss are supportive, he has a competent team if he can continue to use them effectively. He has an extroverted and likeable personality that he can use to communicate his direction, he has strong operational capability and knows the business extremely well. These are all resources at his disposal that he can utilise to achieve his goals.</p> <p>Change the viewing of the situation – actually in this case the view needs to change instead of evaluating everything from the perspective of wanting to get the role, he needs to view it as if he already has the role. This is the preferred outcome – if he had the role what difference would that make to what he is doing (this would have been a much better way in to the question than what I actually did I think, but I'll have to wait until I've reviewed the recordings) Change the doing – this change in his perspective would lead to a change in the way he approached the role.</p> <p>Leverage resources – he can use his relationships with people in the business to achieve significant outcomes and get things done.</p> <p>In developing a more empowering leadership style which is going to be required for him to be effective in the long-term – he can do this well with one of his ops mgrs. But with some that don't communicate as well with him he can tend towards micro managing the situation. He can make decisions and does so what happens in the situations where he makes quick decision and implements well?</p> <p>Strengths are managing operationally; successfully managing his project and working with selected members of his team The specific project is going well and he achieved his specific goal of getting the project signed off by the board. Now more focussed on the longer term goal of retaining his position.</p>
CBC	<p>His mental model of what a leader looks like may be holding him back. We identified early on that he has a tendency to believe that he can only add value if he has all the answers. There may also be a strong need for approval and to be liked which may hold him back from making some tough</p>

	<p>decisions that we will need to if he wants to perform well in this role. He needs to get feedback from people in the moment to feel that he is making progress and therefore finds dealing with introverted people who don't communicate openly with him difficult.</p> <p>Some of his behaviour in directing and controlling is likely to be ineffective and so addressing this so he can effectively use his team will be a key part of him achieving his goal, which he can't achieve on his own.</p> <p>Dealing with conflict can also be difficult – has a tendency not to call poor performance or behaviours because does not know how someone will react. Has one particularly difficult passive-aggressive team member who is probably using this trait against CF1. He becomes quite defensive when we discuss her and how he might address her performance and tends to defend her as having some good qualities.</p> <p>Black and White thinking – if he's not providing the answers he does not engage at all. Either delegating completely or micromanaging. Being a little too aggressive or avoiding completely. There are some underlying thinking patterns here that would be driving this behaviour.</p> <p>Mind-reading – some evidence that he is mind-reading when he is presenting to groups and they don't respond to him as he likes. He does make assumptions that people are not up to the job if they don't do things as he thinks it should be done rather than inquire into the assumptions that someone had when they went into the task.</p> <p>Comparing – he does compare himself to the person who used to do his job who is still at the company and now reporting to him.</p> <p>Hypotheses based on this perspective: Beliefs about needing to have the answers, to be liked are creating some ineffective behaviour patterns such as avoiding confrontation, inability to delegate effectively and not listening or consulting effectively with people. What other information is required? – examples of thinking and behavioural patterns to identify core beliefs Some core beliefs around being valued as an expert which could be challenging for CF1 as he becomes more senior. Already much of what he is involved in is about the management of people rather than the technical industry expertise. In order to become effective in his role he will need to let go of this particular belief and be able to delegate and effectively empower more and get the necessary performance from his team.</p>
Theoretical : Adult dev.	<p>CF1 is likely to be at the level of expert. He likes to have the answer and is threatened when there is any implication that he does not have an answer. He may be transitioning to an achiever mode as he is now starting to think about setting longer term goals.</p> <p>His stage of expert means that he is still identifying with his expertise and being right. This is going to make it difficult for him to achieve as a GM which will require a later stage of ego development.</p>

He has definitely transitioned to a stage where he can reflect on himself. He has given some examples of being able to gain insight into himself in terms of some of his thinking patterns related to needing to have the answer. Interested in sharing more of one's inner nature, traits, emotional intelligence. Able to express his own needs and wants to some extent although still quite subject to the culture of the organisation. Some need to be valued because of his expertise – he may not know when good is good enough. For example, he may continue to add to his people's solutions either because he has the need to be the one to have the final say or that he can't differentiate when something is good enough to get the job done.

He can sometimes seem argumentative and opinionated because if you have a different perspective he can be threatened. In my coaching sessions he is also threatened if any of my questions appear to imply that he does not know something and he perhaps reads that I think he should. CF1 has often expressed that traits and personality are fixed (this is something that a personal at the level of expert). He also has a decision making process that gets hung up – probably not wanting to make the wrong decision or get some people off side, which could be driven from some diplomat thinking.

He will often explain away things that he feels I have inadvertently criticised which is another trait of this stage.

He is beginning to see that sharing his advice is not necessarily the way to deal with either clients or his team. From this perspective and if I'm right then he might be anxious about not being special because of his expertise and not getting the role would mean he would be reabsorbed into the organisation.

In developing greater capacity it could be argued that if CF1 wanted to there would be benefit in moving to an achiever levels. This would assist in setting effective goals and being more effective. While CF1 claims that he is interested in the psychology his self-insight is still relatively limited and asking him to reflect on his values and beliefs wasn't something that he could grasp easily. He is more comfortable with thinking about personality and he had limited awareness of the culture of the organisation as something that is separate to him.

Coaching from this perspective would encourage reflection on elements of himself which are current subject to – company culture, setting of goals in longer timeframes, looking at self in relation to time frames, how you have developed, why you do the things you do are all part of coaching at this stage.

I would hypothesis that in order to be really effective in the GM role there is a current mis-match between an expert level and at a minimum you would need as an achiever and ideally even later stages.

Theoretical: CT	<p>From a CAS perspective CF1 is an agent interacting in the CAS that is his organisation. The quality of his interactions with others in his organisation will be a key focus for him in his new role. There are some people that he has good quality interactions with that lead to the outcomes he expects and others where the interactions are not as effective and will need some additional work.</p> <p>The organisation is going through a particularly high level of change and much of the major transformation work is being led from CF1s division, which is also the largest in terms of people. There is a pattern of interacting within the organisation where poor performance is not addressed where there is a low level of trust and communication about expectations and holding people accountable which could hold the organisation back. There are few organisational systems and processes in place to assist a manager in holding these types of conversations.</p> <p>Stimulating creativity in the organisation has also been lacking and the focus has been on stability, process and the doing things efficiently. From a CAS perspective this is an organisation that is not adaptive but is stuck in an old pattern of behaving while the market is changing around them. CF1 struggles to see why you would want to change the focus from the efficiency and disrupt the patterns but actually it's about holding in tension the change with the current efficient process to maximise both.</p> <p>In coaching from his perspective part of my role is to bring in some new ways of thinking and let my expertise be new information into the system. CF1s connections outside the organisation are not strong, and he is limited in the way he sees the world through a small network externally, although he has a strong network internally which is an advantage.</p> <p>Is he having the right conversations with the people in the organisation – the LVI would say that he is having directive conversations and selling his message rather than empowering and stimulating thinking in his people. Coaching from this perspective would involve raising his awareness of this and then helping him create solutions to this through our conversation.</p> <p>From this perspective it will also be useful to think about the feedback loops that his new actions might interact with, how will any of his initiatives be taken up and what will happen. They will introduce a new rem program – it's hard to predict what effect that might have on the sales.</p> <p>The organisational system is acting on CF1 to resist some of his initiatives – there will be some negative feedback loops that will spring into action when he attempts to launch changes. These could include specific rejection of his initiatives, ignoring of his direction and lack of interaction from others who will attempt to restore stability if they feel that the system is becoming too unstable for them.</p> <p>There is a certain amount of new knowledge from me in terms of approaches to management which might assist him that I could help him implement but then we would need to monitor what happens when he puts them into practice.</p> <p>Looking at CF1 specifically there are some interactions he is having in his own reflective space that will affect how he interacts with other people, particularly the mental models and value of being the expert. This will have an effect on his ability to delegate and coach his team to being effective. Thinking more broadly about the organisation and its position in its industry is also helpful in setting some broader perspective for CF1 around his role. Thinking at a systems level brings this type of strategic thinking into his role.</p>
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	<p>In coaching from this perspective, the goal emerged from the first conversation I had and that he had already had with himself about what he wanted to get from the conversation. These goals evolved throughout the coaching and the coaching conversations helped him gain a different perspective on what was required.</p> <p>Coaching across the web of interactions we could look at the different levels in the organisation of the organisational systems and processes and what CF1 interacts with in order to be effective, right down to looking at CF1 as a system and what is going on. This is not inconsistent with other perspectives as SF and Positive Psych approaches both support a future focused emergent approach.</p> <p>Add to that the quality of the interactions he is having; changing the nature of the conversations to help the organisation be more adaptive.</p>
Theoretical: Adult Learning	<p>Adult learning theory perspective for CF1 would be that he is in a new role and that there is a lot of learning required for him to be able to perform effectively. At the start we talked about getting the board paper signed as a learning project, but actually this was too short a timeline to be of value longer term.</p> <p>From this perspective coaching is about supporting CF1 to learn as he does his new role. His formal learning about leading and management has been limited and so he will need to learn from experience as well as from applying potential approaches that we discuss.</p> <p>The coaching is focused around his gaining experience in his new role in which he has no experience and is getting limited assistance from how to go about it from the company. There is a risk that without some support and coaching that he will fail to learn quickly enough what he needs to work out in order to do the job.</p> <p>There is some shift in perspective on himself in this role that is required to be effective – he sees his role as directing and having the answers and the coaching should provide opportunities for a shift in this perspective – a double loop learning experience that shows how having a different view would change how he approached specific tasks.</p> <p>Encouraging trying new approaches and ideas and reflecting on how they worked and what he learned from that would be useful. In having conversations with people, what part did he play in the outcome, how would he do it different in the future and some critical reflection would assist him in developing the necessary skills more quickly.</p> <p>Keeping the learning journal and reflecting on what is happening and what he's learned from it is one tool to facilitate his development.</p>
Strategic: PP	<p>CF1 has some key strengths that he can utilise that would assist him in reaching his goals. He has high energy, determination, strives for goals and is generally resilient. He handled the death of his father and the stress of his new role with resilience and took the appropriate care of himself to get through that period.</p>

	<p>His purpose in life seems to be around achieving his ambitions, being able to spend quality time with friends and family and staying balanced in his work-life. This has been challenged in stepping up to his role and some balance is needed to correct it. However, his thinking style is such that he focuses on what he can do within the timeframes and does not appear to be too critical when he does not achieve everything that he thinks he should do.</p> <p>He does find himself working long hours frequently and taking a lot of work home at the weekends. He accepts that this is part of having a more senior role, but also recognises that this isn't sustainable.</p> <p>I would consider that CF1 is a positive energiser – he has a generally positive mindset and is not one to be negative around people and he appears to have a positive impact on people. He has a strong network within the organisation which he can leverage to achieve his goals and get what is required implemented.</p> <p>He would need to utilise his team better to compliment his skills so that he does not need to take on everything himself.</p>
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What story makes sense based on what perspectives and then how would I decide which one to approach?

Because there are some specific and measurable goals that CF1 has articulated the coaching needs to focus on goal achievement. However, there needs to be a broader context in the goals that could be achieved with a change in perspective on himself in the role. This could be achieved through a constructive adult dev approach working on making things more object, however, my concern here that at an expert level is that he would possibly reject the approach and it could take too long to work through the process of uncovering.

My approach will be based on taking some of the LVI feedback as pointers for what he needs to work on, setting some appropriate goals and using SF approaches and adult learning approaches to help him quickly achieve some key changes in behaviour and thinking and achieve his goal. Using a behavioural approach of trying new behaviours and ideas and reflecting on them can be supplemented by some work at the cognitive level if needed.

A simple goal setting approach runs the risk of focusing too much on his short term goals which could work but there is a risk that it inhibits his mindset. Using some SF thinking about how he would act if he had the role confirmed may help him tap into what he needs to actually do in that role.

While not specifically using Cons. Ad. Dev approaches this is likely to help facilitate growth towards an achiever stage. Setting longer term goals, and working towards them is an achiever mindset. In addition, it's likely that the mindset of needing to be an expert would be useful to explore in the early sessions to see how deeply rooted this is and whether he is able to see how it drives particular behaviours.

Use CT thinking to keep the focus on interactions and creating some instability in the system in order for change to occur and helping him think about feedback loops.

Process:

Using Cycle of self-regulation as primary process for coaching, with each session reviewing progress to the goals, refining the goals and action steps to achieving them. Also, using some reflection in and between sessions and using Kolb's learning cycle as an over-arching process. Wrap up in the last session to reflect on what he's achieved and the changes he has made, and what he has learned. Also the last session will need to assist in how he will continue the development to create an attitude of life-long learning.

Introduce feedback at session 3 from LVI to add in some more information (new information to the system in the form of feedback and see how that assists him in changing behaviour). This is also a way of introducing a model of leadership as he has limited formal education on management and leadership but we can assume that he knows what sort of leader he wants to be even without that. His exposure to different types of leaders has now been increased because he has a new manager who is definitely doing things differently.

Example Account using PAIR framework Framework CF2

Purpose

To develop her ability to work more effectively with her peers, ruffling less feathers and taking a broader perspective on her role as a leader in the organisation.

Stakeholder view

Key stakeholders interviewed were her immediate manager who is the COO and the SVP of HR. Others completed the LVI and the key themes were:-

- Direct reports were happy with how she manages them, feel she pushes them quite hard.
- Difference between two boss's ratings reflects how they have interacted with her and what they expect. She won't back down vs. she drives change and delivers well.
- Peers are a mixed response reflecting the different relationships she has with them.

Current Mgr. is concerned about her ability to work with people. She is seen as aggressive when she won't back down. He has to step in to make decisions or sort out conflict that she creates.

Social Realm Factors	Person Realm (psycho/physiological)Factors
<p>Her direct reports are very loyal – she protects them as well as challenges them to perform to her standards. Mainly female peers she has difficulty with – they are concerned with their status and relationships – she is very impatient with those who don't see things the same way as her, not rational. Will not kowtow to those who have assumed the status of their bosses such as EAs, therefore they retaliate by sabotaging her (emails get deleted, documents go missing)</p> <p>People don't openly target her because they see she is well respected by the CEO and senior leaders.</p> <p>Boss recognises her talent. Seems aware of some of the pressure she is under and how people 'bully' her but does not get involved. Sometime is supportive but seems to sit on the fence. Many of the people she clashes with also work for him.</p> <p>One specific peer trying to muscle in and take over some of her role, boss seems aware but not necessarily supportive of CF2 – seems to be sitting on the fence. Peer does not openly do anything in front of the boss.</p>	<p>Expressed some desire to deal with the issue if it helps her do her job better but not prepared to compromise on her values.</p> <p>Some ability to reflect on her own thinking processes, but limited. Sees thoughts and beliefs as facts – these things are the way they are.</p> <p>Articulates her purpose as providing for her family; no expressed personal ambition for higher leadership positions, will do as the bosses decide how she can best contribute to the company.</p>
<p>Stakeholders express need for CF2 to conform more to the culture of the organisation.</p> <p>People in the organisation collude to block her advance because she has not paid them sufficient respect.</p> <p>In her absence her peer tried to take over much of her role, going to meetings and talking to CF2s team to get information.</p>	<p>If it's not really hard, it's not worth doing. They will promote if they think I can do a good job, otherwise I will stay in this same role. Must not fail – failure is really painful to me, and should be avoided.</p> <p>I must 'protect' my team, we must deliver our outcomes.</p> <p>Need to sacrifice myself for what other's want – family, boss, her team.</p> <p>Relies on logic and rational thinking to make decisions.</p> <p>'if that's what the bosses decide..' Must do what is best for the company in terms of delivering my results.</p> <p>Can't be seen as being aggressive, complaining to the boss about other people.</p>

<p>Patriarchal leadership culture. Informal power networks built on relationships and tenure. Executive assistants wield a lot of informal power. Company norms of managing the task as priority – people are not led, but the delivery of results is. Social structures of the organisation organised along status, tenure closeness to the senior leaders, there are lots of cliques. Staff belong to individuals, not roles. A senior leader moves, his support staff have to move with him. Culture is gradually shifting as old CEO and many of his people have left the organisation. New CEO trying to drive a less relationship based culture.</p>	<p>Values – loyalty to past and present CEOs, providing for her family, respect for hierarchy of seniority, competence and getting the job done over the relationships, meritocracy is important, Fear of failure or not delivering on her commitments. Must be competent to be respected. People should be given jobs just because of their relationships (although this is how she got her job!). Low psychological flexibility – her belief system seems 'stuck' and there is limited motivation to change as expressed personal ambition is low. Narrow definition of what achieving results looks like – a task focus.</p>
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Hypotheses

The primary driver for the behaviour the company sees as problematic is a fear of failure, which in her current context may be failure to deliver a project to her high standards. If someone looks like getting in the way of her ability to deliver she manages her anxiety by becoming hyper-rational and escalating her assertiveness. This escalates if they refuse to be 'rational'. She does not recognise any value in the culture of relationships and tenure, that people have status concerns. She sees these as emotional reasons and will try and use rationality to overcome them. Both sides will escalate. Has a narrow definition of success – delivering her outcomes even though she is now relatively senior.

The culture of the organisation is a culture where being part of the group is important, relationships are established based on hierarchy. Tenure and seniority are respected and people fear standing out as being different. People who are different are isolated and it is hard to get things done. CF2 stands out as different because she does not buy into this culture. She is respected and supported by the CEO which on one hand offers her some protection but on the other hand people are resentful of her which makes them even more sensitive to her behaviour which they interpret as being because she is protected by the CEO that she is aloof and abrasive.

Interacts with her personal drivers which are to provide for her family (she is the main breadwinner)

CF2 is estimated to be at an expert action-logic whereas the dominant culture in the organisation is a diplomat action-logic. The world views are quite different causing the conflict between CF2 and many of her diplomat action-logic peers.

Potential points for intervention:

Opening up her perspectives and giving her more flexibility in her thinking. Identifying the triggers for her more aggressive responses and developing some strategies for changing the pattern. Helping her with some specific examples and relationships. Providing her support which she is not getting from many other people. She sees being tough as being important.

Coaching Process

Start by collecting and identifying patterns to discuss. Review the examples and reflect on: what are the triggers, what might be the other person's perspectives, what could she do differently. Use this cycle to review new approaches and over time to build some new patterns of thinking, finding what she can learn from the different scenarios. Helping her broaden out a perspective.

Each session allow some time for her to vent and to provide a supportive relationship.

Appendix 3

Anonymous sample Leadership Versatility Index

Leadership Versatility Index®

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Robert E. Kaplan
Robert B. Kaiser

Pat Sample
August 2009

FORCEFUL

ENABLING

STRATEGIC

OPERATIONAL

KAPLAN DEVRIES INC.

Leadership Versatility Index®

Robert E. Kaplan and Robert B. Kaiser

Feedback for:

Pat Sample

August 2009

General manager (Line)

Business – publicly traded

Managerial experience:

13 years

Time in current job:

6 months

Feedback from:

15 Total Coworkers

1 Boss

2 Other superiors

4 Peers

8 Direct Reports

Note: Results for Peers and Direct Reports are presented separately only if three or more individuals from those groups provide ratings. However, if only one or two individuals from those groups provide ratings, their data will be included in the results reported for All Coworkers.

Leadership Versatility Index, version 3.0

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Authors: Kaplan, Robert E. and Kaiser, Robert B.

Published by:

Kaplan DeVries Inc.

1903-G Ashwood Ct.

Greensboro, NC 27455

t | 336.288.8200

f | 336.282.6878

E-mail: info@kaplandevries.com

Websites: www.kaplandevries.com www.versatileleader.com

The method of assessment used by the Leadership Versatility Index is protected by U.S. Patent No. 7,121,830.

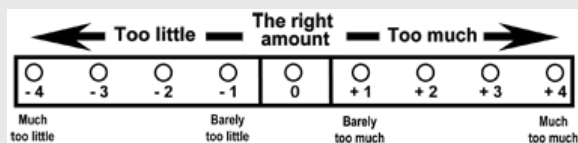
The **Leadership Versatility Index (LVI)** measures versatility on two complementary pairs of leadership dimensions:

Forceful & Enabling Strategic & Operational

Each pair is a combination of opposites. To be good at both sides of oppositions or dualities like these is to be versatile. Many leaders, however, are better at one side than the other. They are lopsided. Your scores on this instrument will give you a reading on the extent to which you are versatile or lopsided.

Overdoing and Underdoing

The LVI's rating scale is shown below. As you noted in filling out the survey on yourself, this is not the typical kind of rating scale, where higher scores are "better." The most desirable score on this instrument falls right in the middle of the scale, a score of "0."



The scale was designed on the premise that suboptimal performance is often a result of either overdoing a behavior or underdoing it. Any "minus scores" (negative numbers) you receive indicate that your raters think you do too little of the behavior--that you either don't do it frequently enough or with enough intensity. "Plus scores" (positive numbers) indicate that they think you do too much of the behavior--that you either do it too often or with too much intensity. Again, scores close to "0" (zero) are ideal.

Pairing Opposites

Although the survey had you and your coworkers rate each item individually, it was actually designed as a series of pairs, intended to be complements. For example:

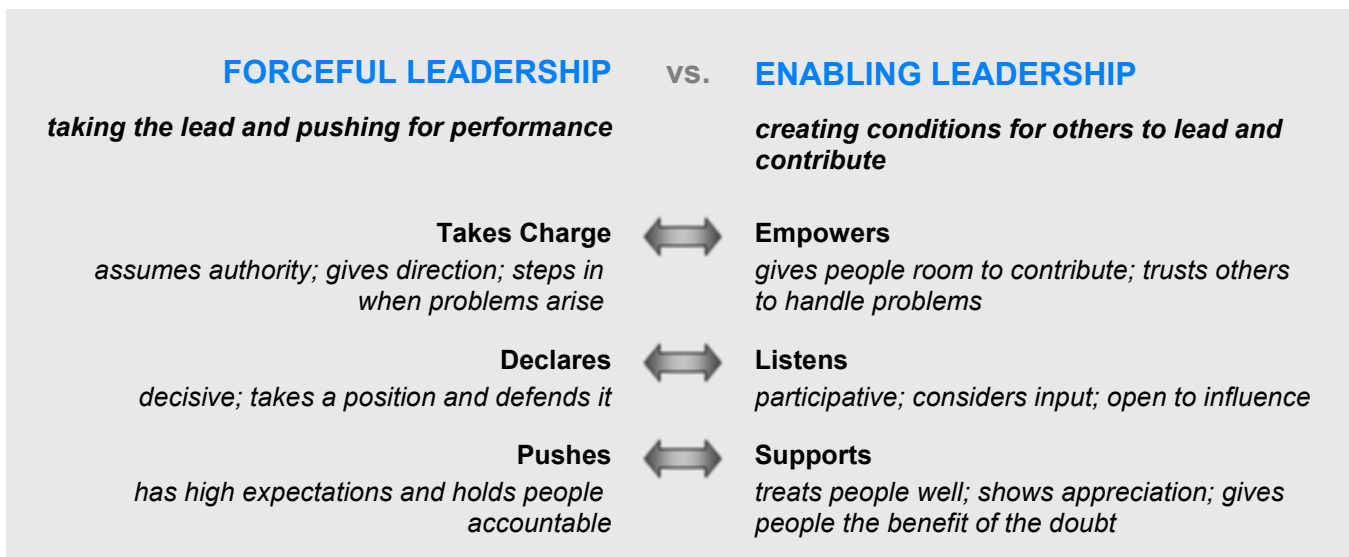
"Steps in. Gets personally involved when problems arise."

&

"Trusts people to handle problems that come up in their area of responsibility."

This feedback report presents the results in terms of pairs of opposing behaviors like the one above so that you can see how versatile or lopsided you are at a very concrete level.

The LVI is based on a leadership model that consists of two major pairs of opposing but complementary approaches. These two oppositions represent the tensions and trade-offs that make management a balancing act. One pair, Forceful and Enabling, concerns leadership style, *how* one leads. The other pair, Strategic and Operational, concerns the organizational issues a leader focuses on, *what* one leads. Each of these major pairs is comprised of three pairs of specific subdimensions, listed below.





Legend: = Average rating across **All Coworkers** (15)

Note: The results that appear on this graphic are based on your coworkers' ratings and do not include your self-ratings.

Interpretation

1. Color Coding

- A score in the **green** zone indicates a shortcoming (**green** is for "go" or do more).
- A score in the **red** zone is a strength taken too far (**red** is for "stop" or do less).
- A score that falls in the white band between the green and red areas is a strength.

2. The shape of your profile. The closer to a circle your profile is, the more well-rounded it is, as seen by your coworkers. Bulges or flat spots indicate strengths overused and shortcomings.

3. The versatility percentage is an overall index of your versatility. The higher the percentage, the greater your versatility on both forceful-enabling leadership and strategic-operational leadership. The percentage can range from 0 to 100. The majority of leaders score between 70 percent and 90 percent.

Forceful Leadership

taking the lead and pushing for performance

Display Legend

Y = You

Gray Bar = All Coworkers (15)

B = Boss (1)

O = Other superiors (2)

P = Peers (4)

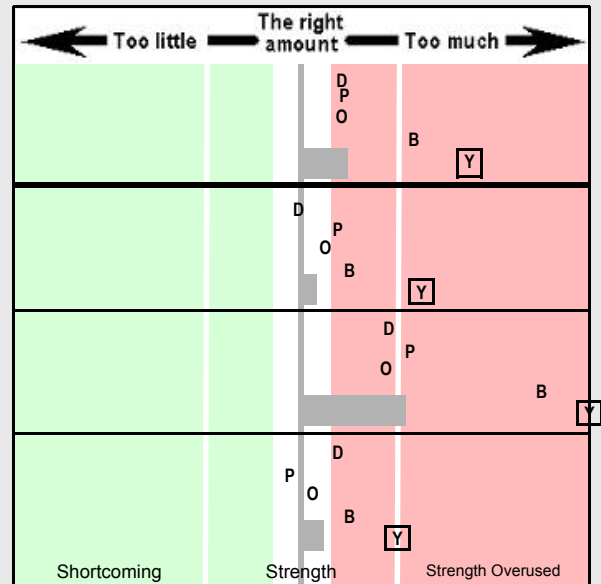
D = Direct Reports (8)

Overall

Takes Charge

Declares

Pushes



Enabling Leadership

creating conditions for others to lead and contribute

Display Legend

Y = You

Gray Bar = All Coworkers (15)

B = Boss (1)

O = Other superiors (2)

P = Peers (4)

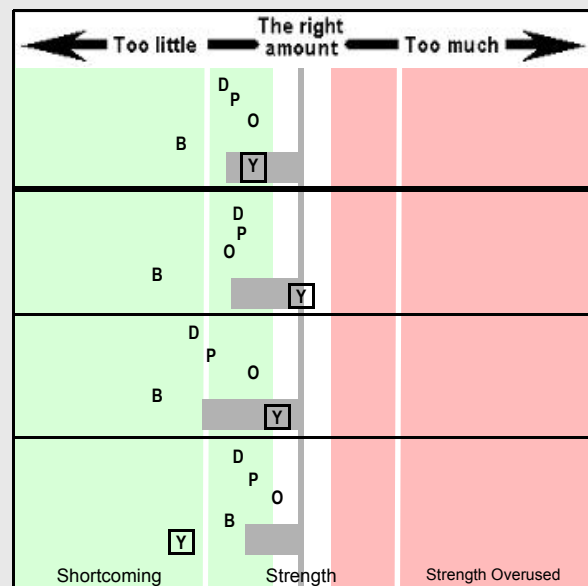
D = Direct Reports (8)

Overall

Empowers

Listens

Supports



F-E Versatility

the ability to freely draw upon these two opposites, unrestricted by bias in favor of one side and prejudice against the other side. The higher the percentage, the greater your versatility on this important duality.

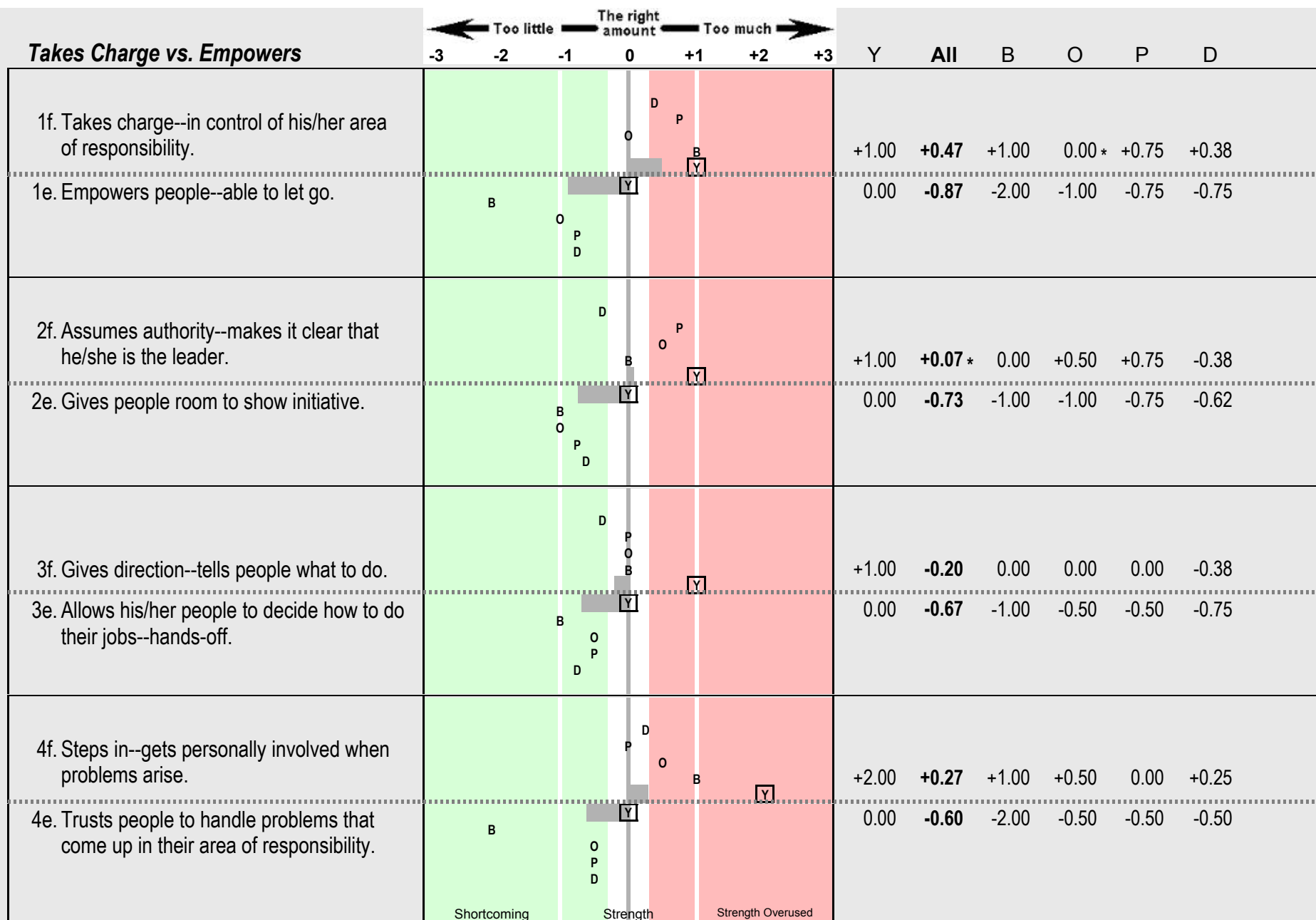
	F-E Versatility
You	62%
All Coworkers	77%
Boss	65%
Other superiors	83%
Peers	77%
Direct Reports	77%

The average F-E Versatility score is 79% (SD=9%).

Forceful & Enabling *item averages*

Pat Sample

August 2009



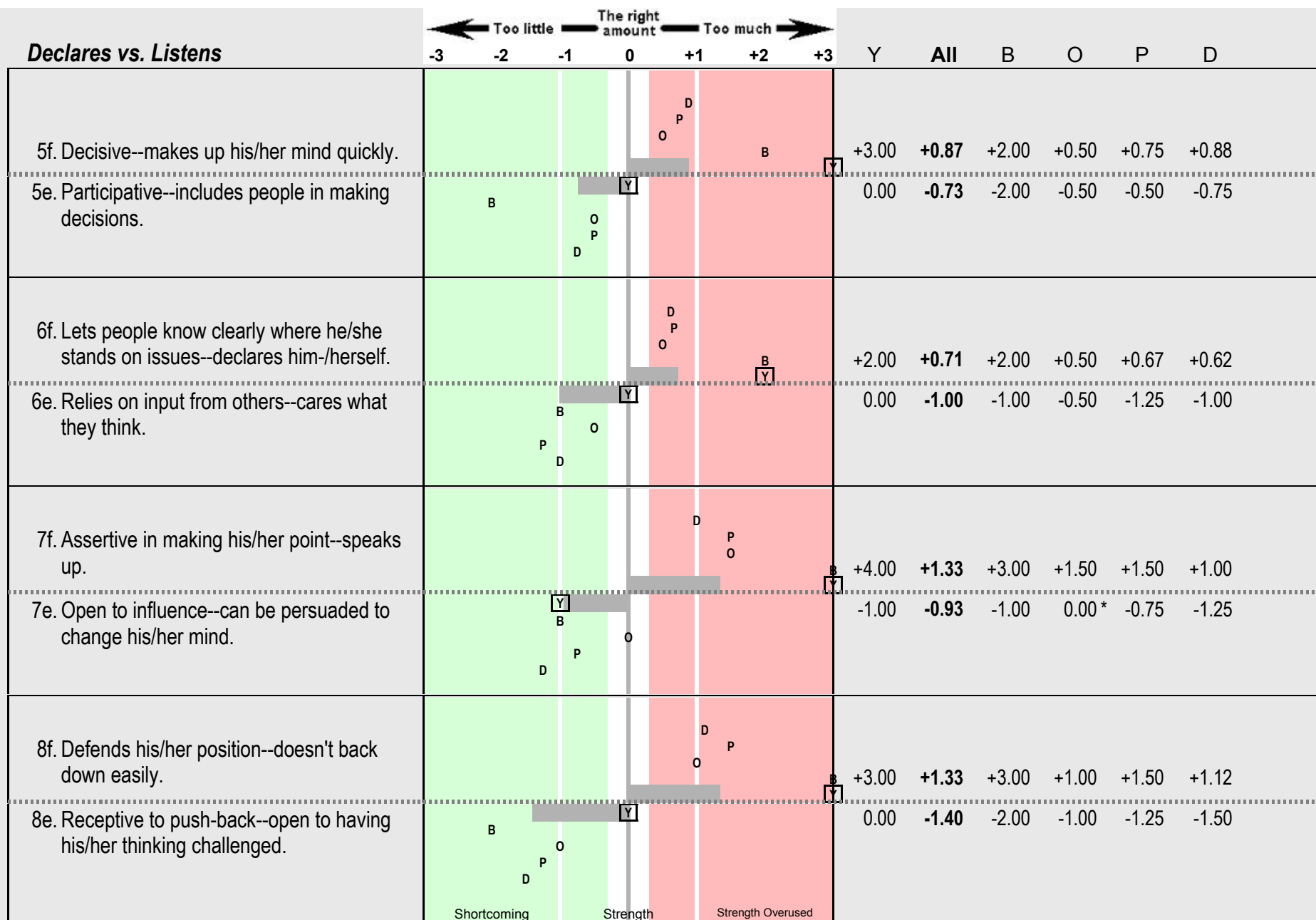
Note: Scores flagged with an * are averages based on a mix of "too little" and "too much" ratings and may be misleading. See p. 9 for an explanation of these scores.

Legend: Y=You, Gray Bar=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Forceful & Enabling *item averages*

Pat Sample

August 2009



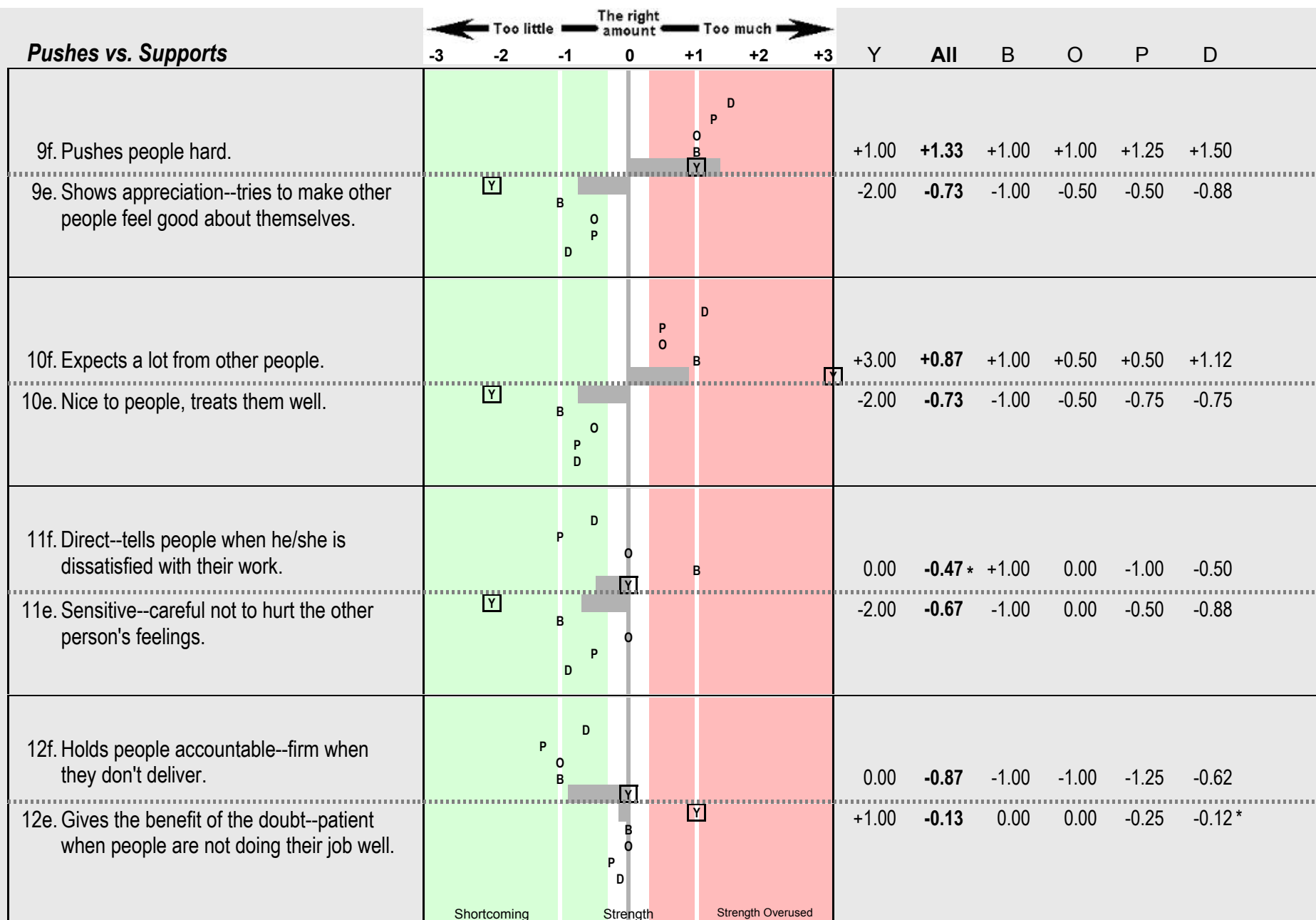
Note: Scores flagged with an * are averages based on a mix of "too little" and "too much" ratings and may be misleading. See p. 9 for an explanation of these scores.

Legend: Y=You, Gray Bar=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Forceful & Enabling *item averages*

Pat Sample

August 2009



Note: Scores flagged with an * are averages based on a mix of "too little" and "too much" ratings and may be misleading. See p. 9 for an explanation of these scores.

Legend: Y=You, Gray Bar=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Forceful & Enabling *distribution of ratings*

Pat Sample
August 2009

FORCEFUL	Too Little				Right Amount		Too Much				
	B	O	P	D	All		B	O	P	D	
Takes Charge											
1f. In control	0	1	0	0	1	6	8	1	1	3	3
2f. Assumes authority	0	0	0	3	3	8	4	0	1	3	0
3f. Gives direction	0	0	0	3	3	12	0	0	0	0	0
4f. Steps in	0	0	0	1	1	9	5	1	1	0	3
Declares											
5f. Decisive	0	0	0	0	0	6	9	1	1	3	4
6f. Takes stands	0	0	0	0	0	6	8	1	1	2	4
7f. Speaks up	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	1	2	4	4
8f. Doesn't back down easily	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	1	2	4	6
Pushes											
9f. Pushes people hard	0	0	0	0	0	3	12	1	2	3	6
10f. Expects a lot	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	1	1	2	6
11f. Direct when dissatisfied	0	0	3	3	6	7	2	1	0	1	0
12f. Holds people accountable	1	2	3	5	11	4	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	3	6	15	25	72	82	9	12	25	36
Proportion	.08	.13	.13	.16	.14	.40	.46	.75	.50	.53	.38

ENABLING	Too Little				Right Amount		Too Much				
	B	O	P	D	All		B	O	P	D	
Empowers											
1e. Empowers people	1	2	3	5	11	4	0	0	0	0	0
2e. Gives people room	1	2	3	4	10	5	0	0	0	0	0
3e. Hands-off	1	1	2	4	8	7	0	0	0	0	0
4e. Trusts people	1	1	2	2	6	9	0	0	0	0	0
Listens											
5e. Participative	1	1	2	5	9	6	0	0	0	0	0
6e. Relies on input	1	1	4	6	12	3	0	0	0	0	0
7e. Open to influence	1	1	3	6	11	3	1	0	1	0	0
8e. Receptive to push-back	1	2	3	5	11	4	0	0	0	0	0
Supports											
9e. Shows appreciation	1	1	2	5	9	6	0	0	0	0	0
10e. Treats people well	1	1	3	6	11	4	0	0	0	0	0
11e. Sensitive to people's feelings	1	0	2	6	9	5	1	0	0	0	1
12e. Gives the benefit of the doubt	0	0	1	2	3	10	2	0	0	0	2
Total	11	13	30	56	110	66	4	0	1	0	3
Proportion	.92	.54	.63	.58	.61	.37	.02	.00	.04	.00	.03

Legend: All=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Strategic Leadership

*positioning the organization
for the future*

Display Legend

Y = You

Gray Bar = All Coworkers (15)

B = Boss (1)

O = Other superiors (2)

P = Peers (4)

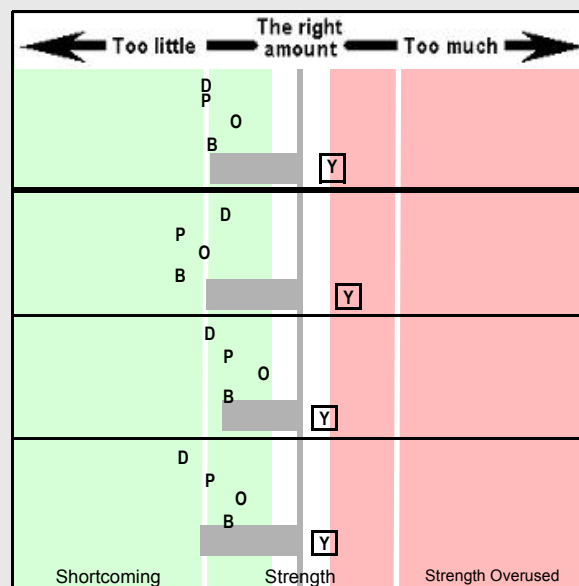
D = Direct Reports (8)

Overall

Direction

Growth

Innovation



Operational Leadership

*focusing the organization on
the short term*

Display Legend

Y = You

Gray Bar = All Coworkers (15)

B = Boss (1)

O = Other superiors (2)

P = Peers (4)

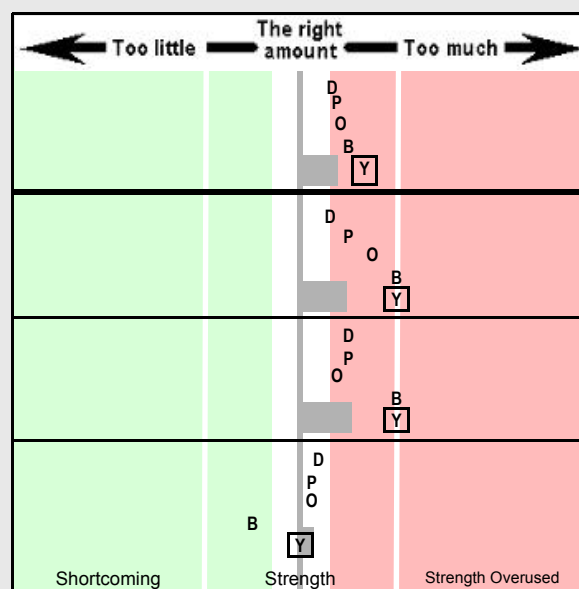
D = Direct Reports (8)

Overall

Execution

Efficiency

Order

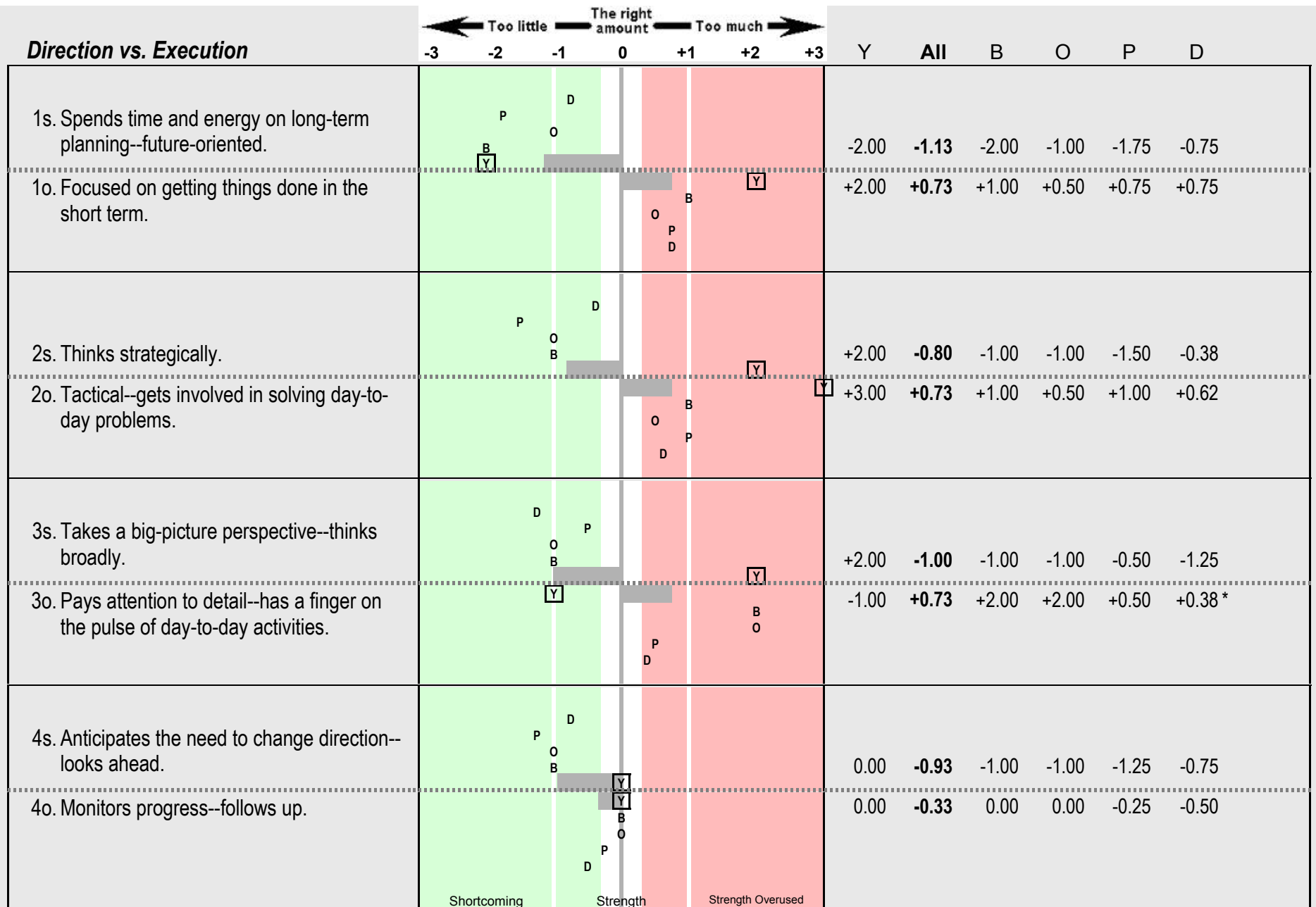


S-O Versatility

*the ability to freely draw upon these two
opposites, unrestricted by bias in favor of one
side and prejudice against the other side. The
higher the percentage, the greater your
versatility on this important duality.*

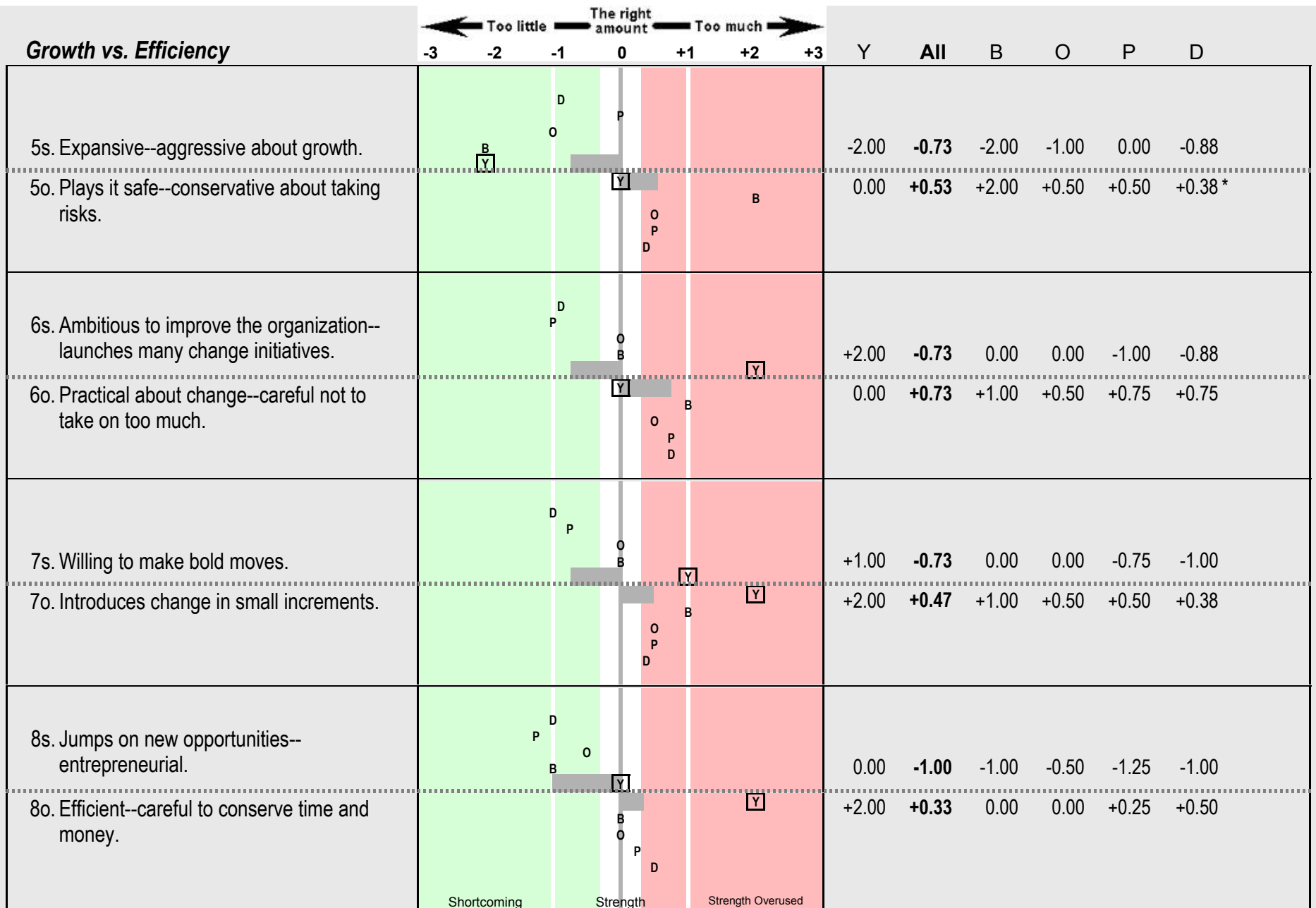
	S-O Versatility
You	69%
All Coworkers	76%
Boss	71%
Other superiors	82%
Peers	77%
Direct Reports	75%

The average S-O Versatility score is 81% (SD=8%).



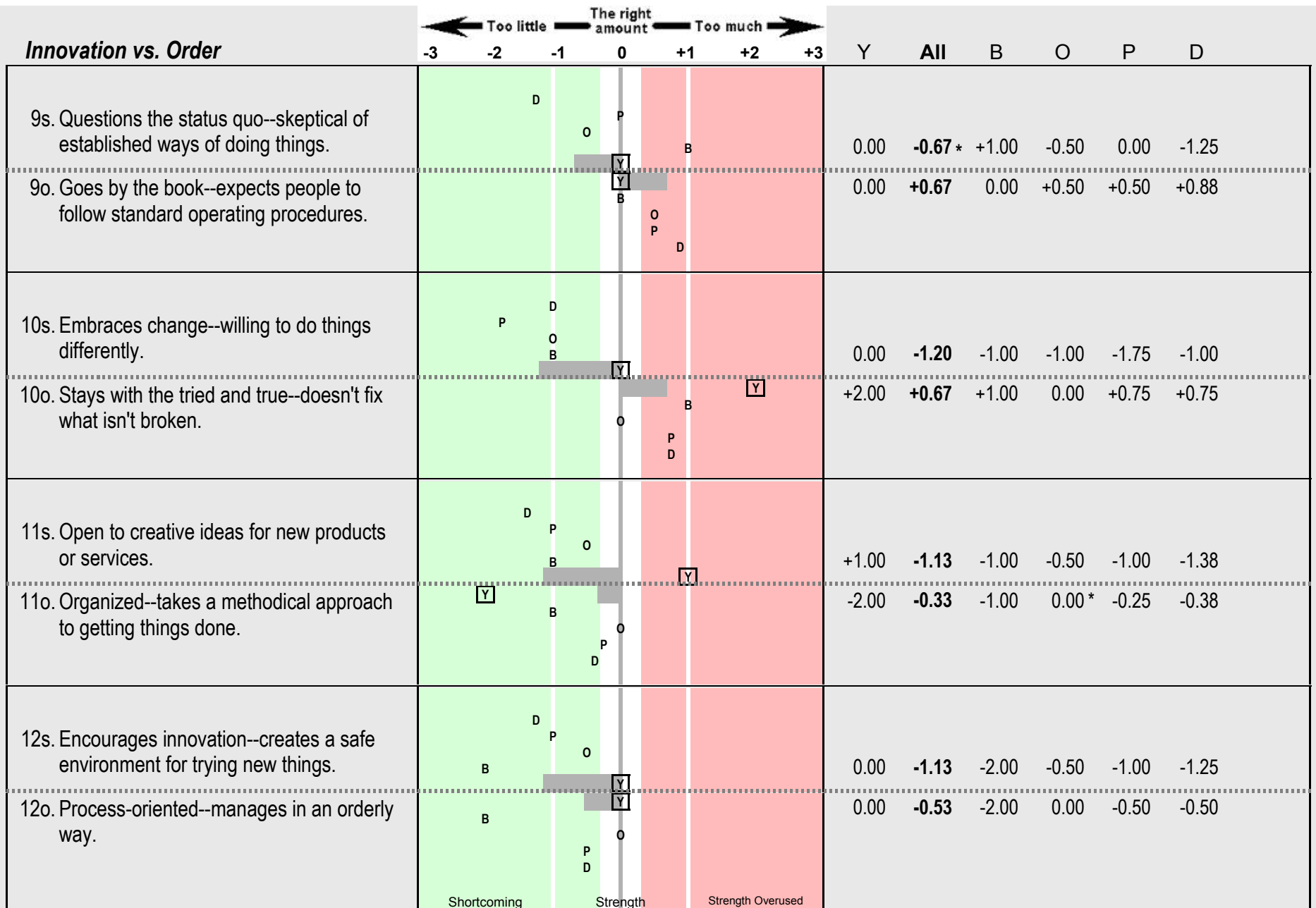
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Legend: Y=You, Gray Bar=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)



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Note: Scores flagged with an * are averages based on a mix of "too little" and "too much" ratings and may be misleading. See p. 14 for an explanation of these scores.

Legend: Y=You, Gray Bar=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Strategic & Operational *distribution of ratings*

Pat Sample

August 2009

STRATEGIC	Too Little				Right Amount		Too Much			
	B	O	P	D	All		B	O	P	D
Direction										
1s. Future-oriented	1	1	4	4	10	5	0	0	0	0
2s. Thinks strategically	1	2	2	4	9	5	1	0	0	1
3s. Big-picture perspective	1	2	2	5	10	5	0	0	0	0
4s. Anticipates change	1	2	2	4	9	6	0	0	0	0
Growth										
5s. Aggressive about growth	1	2	0	4	7	8	0	0	0	0
6s. Launches many changes	0	0	2	3	5	10	0	0	0	0
7s. Bold moves	0	0	2	5	7	7	1	0	0	1
8s. Entrepreneurial	1	1	4	5	11	3	1	0	0	1
Innovation										
9s. Questions the status quo	0	1	0	4	5	9	1	1	0	0
10s. Embraces change	1	2	4	4	11	3	1	0	0	1
11s. Open to new ideas	1	1	3	5	10	5	0	0	0	0
12s. Encourages innovation	1	1	4	5	11	3	1	0	0	1
Total	9	15	29	52	105	69	6	1	0	5
Proportion	.75	.63	.60	.54	.58	.38	.03	.08	.00	.05
OPERATIONAL	Too Little				Right Amount		Too Much			
	B	O	P	D	All		B	O	P	D
Execution										
1o. Short-term focus	0	0	0	0	0	7	8	1	1	2
2o. Tactical	0	0	0	0	0	6	9	1	1	3
3o. Attention to detail	0	0	0	3	3	3	9	1	2	4
4o. Follows up	0	0	1	4	5	10	0	0	0	0
Efficiency										
5o. Conservative about risk	0	0	0	2	2	6	7	1	1	2
6o. Practical about change	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	1	1	3
7o. Incremental change	0	0	0	1	1	7	7	1	1	2
8o. Efficient	0	0	0	1	1	10	4	0	0	1
Order										
9o. Goes by the book	0	0	0	0	0	9	6	0	1	2
10o. Stays with tried and true	0	0	0	1	1	7	7	1	0	2
11o. Organized	1	1	1	3	6	8	1	0	1	0
12o. Process-oriented	1	0	2	3	6	9	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	4	18	25	87	68	7	9	33
Proportion	.17	.04	.08	.19	.14	.48	.38	.58	.38	.40

Legend: All=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Rank Order of Items

Pat Sample
August 2009

	Item	Sub-dimension	You	All	B	O	P	D
7f.	Speaks up	Declares	+4.00	+1.33	+3.00	+1.50	+1.50	+1.00
8f.	Doesn't back down easily	Declares	+3.00	+1.33	+3.00	+1.00	+1.50	+1.12
9f.	Pushes people hard	Pushes	+1.00	+1.33	+1.00	+1.00	+1.25	+1.50
10f.	Expects a lot	Pushes	+3.00	+0.87	+1.00	+0.50	+0.50	+1.12
5f.	Decisive	Declares	+3.00	+0.87	+2.00	+0.50	+0.75	+0.88
1o.	Short-term focus	Execution	+2.00	+0.73	+1.00	+0.50	+0.75	+0.75
2o.	Tactical	Execution	+3.00	+0.73	+1.00	+0.50	+1.00	+0.62
3o.	Attention to detail	Execution	-1.00	+0.73	+2.00	+2.00	+0.50	+0.38 *
6o.	Practical about change	Efficiency	0.00	+0.73	+1.00	+0.50	+0.75	+0.75
6f.	Takes stands	Declares	+2.00	+0.71	+2.00	+0.50	+0.67	+0.62
10o.	Stays with tried and true	Order	+2.00	+0.67	+1.00	0.00	+0.75	+0.75
9o.	Goes by the book	Order	0.00	+0.67	0.00	+0.50	+0.50	+0.88
5o.	Conservative about risk	Efficiency	0.00	+0.53	+2.00	+0.50	+0.50	+0.38 *
1f.	In control	Takes Charge	+1.00	+0.47	+1.00	0.00 *	+0.75	+0.38
7o.	Incremental change	Efficiency	+2.00	+0.47	+1.00	+0.50	+0.50	+0.38
8o.	Efficient	Efficiency	+2.00	+0.33	0.00	0.00	+0.25	+0.50
4f.	Steps in	Takes Charge	+2.00	+0.27	+1.00	+0.50	0.00	+0.25
2f.	Assumes authority	Takes Charge	+1.00	+0.07 *	0.00	+0.50	+0.75	-0.38
12e.	Gives the benefit of the doubt	Supports	+1.00	-0.13	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.12 *
3f.	Gives direction	Takes Charge	+1.00	-0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.38
11o.	Organized	Order	-2.00	-0.33	-1.00	0.00 *	-0.25	-0.38
4o.	Follows up	Execution	0.00	-0.33	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50
11f.	Direct when dissatisfied	Pushes	0.00	-0.47 *	+1.00	0.00	-1.00	-0.50
12o.	Process-oriented	Order	0.00	-0.53	-2.00	0.00	-0.50	-0.50
4e.	Trusts people	Empowers	0.00	-0.60	-2.00	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
11e.	Sensitive to people's feelings	Supports	-2.00	-0.67	-1.00	0.00	-0.50	-0.88
3e.	Hands-off	Empowers	0.00	-0.67	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75
9s.	Questions the status quo	Innovation	0.00	-0.67 *	+1.00	-0.50	0.00	-1.25
10e.	Treats people well	Supports	-2.00	-0.73	-1.00	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75
2e.	Gives people room	Empowers	0.00	-0.73	-1.00	-1.00	-0.75	-0.62
5e.	Participative	Listens	0.00	-0.73	-2.00	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75
5s.	Aggressive about growth	Growth	-2.00	-0.73	-2.00	-1.00	0.00	-0.88
6s.	Launches many changes	Growth	+2.00	-0.73	0.00	0.00	-1.00	-0.88
7s.	Bold moves	Growth	+1.00	-0.73	0.00	0.00	-0.75	-1.00
9e.	Shows appreciation	Supports	-2.00	-0.73	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	-0.88
2s.	Thinks strategically	Direction	+2.00	-0.80	-1.00	-1.00	-1.50	-0.38
12f.	Holds people accountable	Pushes	0.00	-0.87	-1.00	-1.00	-1.25	-0.62
1e.	Empowers people	Empowers	0.00	-0.87	-2.00	-1.00	-0.75	-0.75
4s.	Anticipates change	Direction	0.00	-0.93	-1.00	-1.00	-1.25	-0.75
7e.	Open to influence	Listens	-1.00	-0.93	-1.00	0.00 *	-0.75	-1.25
3s.	Big-picture perspective	Direction	+2.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.50	-1.25
6e.	Relies on input	Listens	0.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.50	-1.25	-1.00
8s.	Entrepreneurial	Growth	0.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.50	-1.25	-1.00
11s.	Open to new ideas	Innovation	+1.00	-1.13	-1.00	-0.50	-1.00	-1.38
12s.	Encourages innovation	Innovation	0.00	-1.13	-2.00	-0.50	-1.00	-1.25
1s.	Future-oriented	Direction	-2.00	-1.13	-2.00	-1.00	-1.75	-0.75
10s.	Embraces change	Innovation	0.00	-1.20	-1.00	-1.00	-1.75	-1.00
8e.	Receptive to push-back	Listens	0.00	-1.40	-2.00	-1.00	-1.25	-1.50

Note: Scores that are flagged with an * are difficult to interpret; they are based on a mix of "too much" and "too little" ratings.

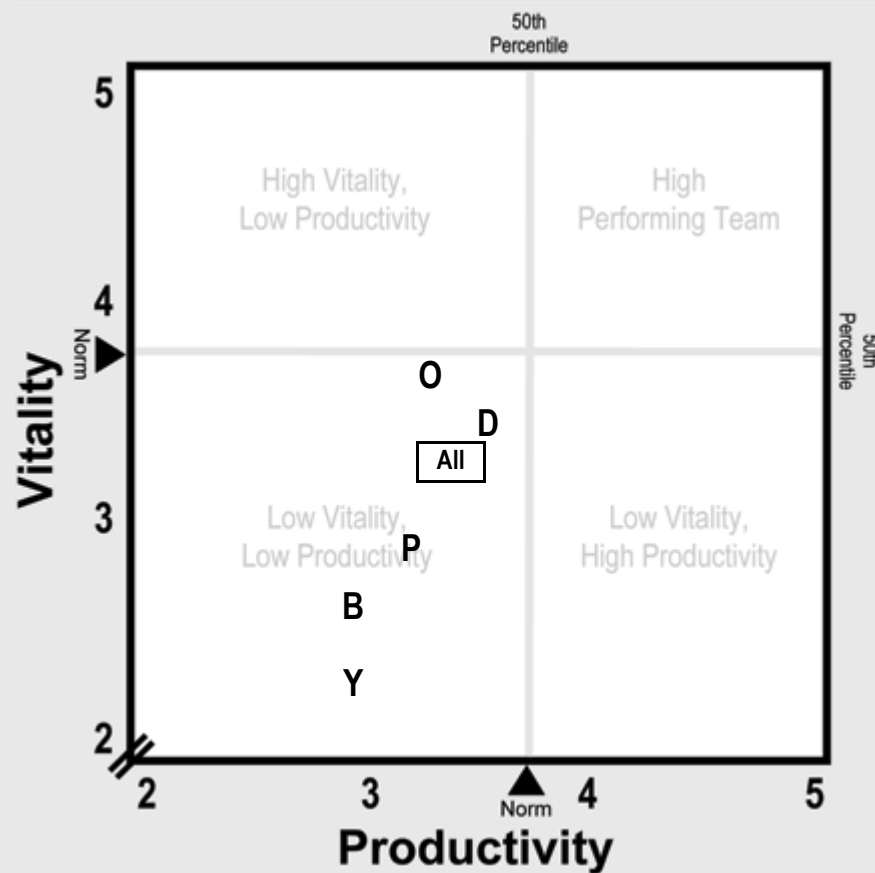
Legend: All=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Effective leaders build teams that get stellar results and can keep it up over time. Their teams are characterized by two things:

Productivity refers to the volume and quality of the team's output.

Vitality concerns how team members feel about the work and about each other.

You and your coworkers rated your team on a 3-item measure of productivity and a separate 3-item measure of vitality. Below are the overall results. The results for the specific items appear on the next page.



Legend: Y=You, All=All Coworkers (15), B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

Scale Item	Y	All Coworkers (15)	B (1)	O (2)	P (4)	D (8)
Productivity	3.00	3.42	3.00	3.33	3.25	3.58
Quantity of output	3.00	3.53	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.63
Quality of output	3.00	3.07	3.00	3.00	2.75	3.25
Overall productivity	3.00	3.67	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.88
Vitality	2.33	3.29	2.67	3.67	2.92	3.46
Morale	2.00	3.47	3.00	3.50	3.75	3.38
Engagement with the work	3.00	3.13	2.00	3.50	2.50	3.50
Cohesiveness	2.00	3.27	3.00	4.00	2.50	3.50

Note: Raters rated each item on a 1-to-5 scale where higher scores indicate more of the attribute in question.

Legend: Y=You, B=Boss (1), O=Other superiors (2), P=Peers (4), D=Direct Reports (8)

1. What are this person's major strengths as a leader—what do you most appreciate or respect about him/her?

Note: Each bullet represents a different respondent. Comments are presented *exactly* as submitted.

You

- I am honest and ethical with high principles. I take my responsibility as a leader very seriously. I give everything to my job. And I have deep technical expertise in my functional area with a lot of experience.

Boss

- Pat is a take-charge manager who really understands the operational side of the business. Intent on getting results. She is very clear where she stands on issues and speaks her mind. And she is a reliable, go-to manager; you can count on her to get the job done.

Other superiors

- She has grown up in this company and knows her business very well. She isn't afraid to step up and take responsibility for fixing problems either.
- Pat is known as a hard-charger who will go the extra mile to get results. She has what they call managerial courage. She also has deep experience in manufacturing.

Peers

- When a decision is made, she takes detailed care in its implementation. Very good drive for results. Makes sure her voice is heard.
- Understands how the business works, at an intimate, detailed level. She is a natural leader and presses hard for results. Has a big presence.
- Willing to understand any trouble (big or small) or activity and be involved to learn more from it. Pat is really good at understanding problems at a detailed level. She is quick to establish a clear view of alternatives.
- She knows what she wants and does everything to achieve her goals. She is also a great sparring partner to help someone better understand complex situations. She is not afraid of making decisions. She shows courage in her management.

Direct Reports

- A sense of urgency and drive for results. Pat will do whatever it takes to deliver.
- Pat is pragmatic, fast, and focused on results. She pushes people to perform at a higher level.
- Great with numbers, really quick on her feet, a masterful problem solver. Very analytical.
- Pat is a hands-on leader who really knows the business. She also has deep technical smarts due to her experience.
- Pat is very knowledgeable in her area of expertise; she has a very deep understanding of operations and the supply chain.

Direct Reports

- Pat is very clear about what she believes should be done. She always takes a position and is quick to let you know where she stands.
- One of the best improvisers and problem-solvers I have ever met! She also has a very strong work ethic and stands up for what she believes in.
- Pat is a natural leader, who knows exactly where she wants her team to go and never gives up until she reaches her targets. She has tremendous drive and focus on results, and she really knows her stuff.

2. Does this leader overuse any of his or her strengths? Briefly explain how, by taking them to an extreme, the "strengths become weaknesses."

Note: Each bullet represents a different respondent. Comments are presented *exactly* as submitted.

You

- I can put too much pressure on the team in order to deliver results. Very demanding, which can bring some loss of confidence from coworkers. Speed can become impatience and too much pressure. I have also learned that I can come on strong, and shut other people down. Can be defensive at times.

Boss

- Pat leads with her opinion and comes on too strong. She will raise an issue, then proceed to say what she thinks should be done. I admire her initiative, but sometimes she's too quick to speak up. Once she locks onto a position, it is hard to get her to see other perspectives. She intimidates some people with her assertiveness, instead of influencing them in more subtle ways. She can also be very critical or peoples' ideas.

Other superiors

- Pat is a bit impatient—impatient to meet her objectives or the objectives of her unit. She is clearly results-oriented. This orientation could put high pressure on the members of her team. It could be a risk of over-management.
- She is very knowledgeable, but can be sometimes seem a bit opinionated. She relies too much on her operational knowledge.

Peers

- Because she is a quick and intelligent person, some people on her team might not follow her mind as fast as expected. They feel frustrated due to the fact that they don't understand what Pat says and don't dare to ask for explanations. Pat should be more careful in this situation and ensure that everybody understands her point.
- Sometimes too detail-oriented. Thinks she can manage with an Excel file and a few action plans. More communication and dialogue is needed, not just more numbers.
- Pat wants to achieve her goals and has difficulties accepting others' points of view. She can be very dogmatic if she thinks she is right.
- Sometimes Pat can be a little bit too aggressive during discussion.

Direct Reports

- She is a great problem-solver and knows the technical side of the business inside and out; however, she tends to get too involved in solving technical problems, to the point of micromanaging some times. She typically does this in the operational area. I have never seen her micromanage in other areas.
- Can be very arrogant, especially toward weak people. She thinks from an operational perspective, can be limited in her ability to see things from a sales and marketing perspective.
- As results-oriented, she can be a bit narrow-minded and short-sighted. For instance, she sometimes says no to good ideas and new approaches because there will be a learning curve.

Direct Reports

- She is very smart, but can also jump too conclusions, without considering all the relevant facts. This could be perceived as a strength turned into a weakness.
- Pat is really strong in operations, but she also has a tendency to swoop in and take over on tactical matters that are frankly beneath her.
- Too impatient—changes are not so easily accomplished in the reality of that on the spread sheet. Could burn people out.
- Very principled but sometimes inflexible. Pat also has high standards, but often expects too much from people.
- Pat can sometimes be aggressive toward her team in her willingness to get the best out of them.

3. Does this leader have any shortcomings—areas where he or she needs to be stronger or do more?

Note: Each bullet represents a different respondent. Comments are presented *exactly* as submitted.

You

- I need to spend more time planning ahead. I have lots of ideas for where to take this unit, but need to spend less time reacting and more time on strategic planning. It is difficult because so much of our results depend on execution. And there is a lot of pressure to deliver in the near term. I could also delegate more. I could also be more open to other points of view.

Boss

- Pat needs to show more interest in other people's ideas, among her peers and especially on her team. I sometimes think she leaves money on the table by teeing up an issue and offering her solutions and ideas out of the gate. If she could slow down, introduce a problem, and solicit input, she would have greater buy-in and probably better quality solutions. This is especially so in areas outside her realm of expertise and experience.

Other superiors

- Pat could get more out of her people. She should draw them out more, invite their ideas and participation more. Her organization is centered around her and this limits how much her people can contribute.
- Pat should be more strategic in her approach.

Peers

- I'm not sure that Pat is a strategic thinker. Most of her concerns are minute-by-minute. I sometimes think she sacrifices the long term for short-term results.
- Pat sometimes doesn't know what she doesn't know. Sometimes she could be more humble and seek more information rather than appear like she has all the answers.
- Pat could sharpen her people skills. She could especially be a better, more active listener.
- Collaboration. She is too focused on her team and shows little interest in lateral teams.

Direct Reports

- Pat could be more realistic about what can and can't be done. Her expectations are too high and this has her issuing too many priorities. A more realistic appraisal of what is feasible would give us greater focus.
- I don't Pat fully understands the business, especially the sales and marketing functions. She has little experience in these areas and tends to avoid them, to the point of being out of touch.
- Pat sometimes seems risk averse and unwilling to change. She is not receptive to fresh ideas. Pat is kind of a loner in that she doesn't seek input. She could also show more appreciation.
- Pat could be more patient. Her urgency is appreciated, but sometimes she charges on without all the information. She is also too busy doing to think about what we are doing.

Direct Reports

- It sometimes feels as if she doesn't appreciate the way a business functions. It is obvious that she favors Ops and is not interested in the marketing side.
- Sometimes I wonder if Pat trusts us. She doesn't delegate as much as she should. She is also not always willing to try other peoples ideas.
- Pat isn't a very good listener. Sometimes when you raise an issue, you can tell her mind is somewhere else.
- She is not very inclusive. She doesn't involve people in the major decisions that affect them.

4. Please provide a rating of this person's overall effectiveness as a leader on a ten-point scale where 5 is adequate and 10 is outstanding.

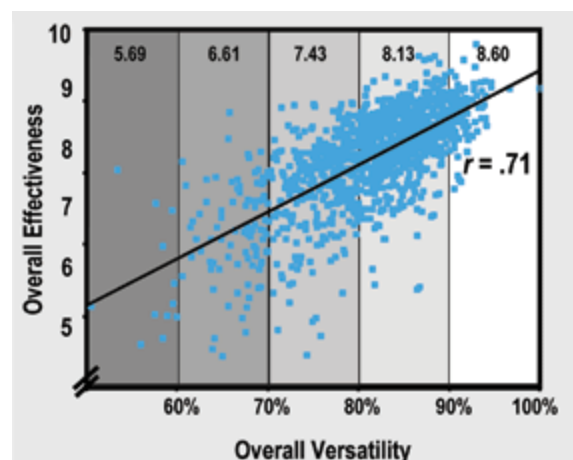
	Average	Lowest	Highest
You	6.50		
All Coworkers (15)	7.57	6.00	8.50
Boss (1)	7.00	7.00	7.00
Other superiors (2)	7.75	7.50	8.00
Peers (4)	7.63	7.00	8.00
Direct Reports (8)	7.56	6.00	8.50

Note: The average effectiveness rating in our database (more than 1,400 senior managers) is 7.73 (standard deviation = 1.06). Self-ratings and peer ratings tend to be a little lower than the average while direct report ratings tend to be a little higher--and these differences are statistically significant.

Versatility: A Key to Leadership Effectiveness

Our research has found a strong relationship between overall effectiveness and versatility as measured by the LVI--a correlation of .71. This relationship is presented in the graph to the right.

The high correlation, based on more than 1,400 senior managers, strongly suggests that managers can become more effective by becoming more versatile--by reining in strengths overused and shoring up shortcomings.



4. Please explain what is effective about his/her leadership and what it would take to get a higher rating.

Note: Each bullet represents a different respondent. Comments are presented *exactly* as submitted.

You

- 6.50. Because of speed, reactivity, strong focus, and good results. Increasing trust and delegation would enable me to do more and bring more effectiveness. I could be more open-minded, and perhaps less defensive and outspoken.

Boss

- 7.00. Pat is a driver and pushes for results, which are usually good. She could do better at forming peer relationships. She needs to learn how to be better at give and take, and not always have to win the debate. Pat needs to be less reactive, and more strategic about how she spends her time. She also needs to learn how to work through a team.

Other superiors

- 8.00. With her business knowledge and her people skills, she is easily accepted by the team and can focus on real issues rather than on conflicts. To get a higher rating, she needs to think more strategically and less tactically. I'd like to see her analyze whether an initiative should be done, rather than how it could be done.
- 7.50. Good initiative, drive for results, and experience. Be more collaborative and strategic.

Peers

- 8.00. I think Pat is already a far better-than-average manager. She still needs to create some distance from her team's work in order to better empower her staff. It would help a lot with her peers to be more open and less defensive.
- 8.00. Pat is overall a good manager. To improve, she will have to get a wider picture and learn to manage high-level people.
- 7.50. A challenging leader that will help us to progress in many fields. Could reach the same results by more consensual ways. Be more supportive when people are in trouble. Let them have time to work on the issues: additional reporting doesn't help to solve the problems.
- 7.00. Be more constructive and cooperative with the rest of our team. Be more trusting of her own team, clarify the ground rules (who decides what, based on what information, for what aim or objective), and control your feelings more in public. Also, manage using criticism and praise at right time (praise in public and, critique in private).

Direct Reports

- 7.50. Pat doesn't treat people with the respect they deserve. She pushes hard, but could get more done with less churn if she used a softer touch.
- 8.00. I think Pat is a great leader as is. We need more of her kind of drive and relentless pursuit of results.

Direct Reports

- 7.50. To get a higher range, Pat has to improve her way of treating people and has to learn to sometimes be more patient for her direct reports who are not always as smart/quick as she is.
- 8.00. Pat is a very good manager. Efficiency, rapidity, and courage are her greatest strengths. She could learn more about other parts of the business.
- 6.00. I think she could increase her effectiveness by showing more interest in every functional area, especially sales and marketing.
- 7.00. Because she is so intense and keen on delivering and she knows a lot about the business. She needs to focus on fewer priorities and doing less herself and delegate things.
- 8.50. She is a great operational leader. She could soften up a bit and show more appreciation for everyone's efforts.
- 8.00. Because she is able to run her business in every aspect of it. She could include people more and be more open to other ways of thinking.

5. What words of encouragement do you have to offer this individual?

Note: Each bullet represents a different respondent. Comments are presented *exactly* as submitted.

You

- Trust myself and lighten up a bit. Learn to trust others and step back.

Boss

- Pat has her heart in the right place. She is making strides in the right direction. My advice is to seek first to understand, then to be understood.

Other superiors

- Pat continues to be someone we can count on. Just know that we believe in you, Pat.
- Hang in there. You have achieved a lot already, and can achieve even more.

Peers

- Pat has a lot of gifts, and I admire her deep knowledge of operations.
- Take the leap of faith, Pat: take a chance, trust people, and see what happens. You'll be surprised by how much people can do if you show you believe in them.
- Trust your peers, Pat. We're on your side.
- I like working with Pat and think she adds a lot to our team.

Direct Reports

- I hope Pat isn't discouraged by this feedback. It may not all be positive, but if you can take it in, you'll be the stronger leader for it.
- Pat has a very bright future. If she can add on the strategic and people-skills pieces, she will be an extraordinary leader.
- Pat, you don't have to always know everything. We already know you know a lot!
- Just remember what you already know: treat people like you want to be treated. You already have our respect.
- You have helped me raise my game by challenging me. Thank you.
- I have a lot of respect for Pat. She knows more than I will ever know about this business.
- I think Pat is one of the best leaders in the company. Keep it up!
- Trust yourself, Pat. You know what you are doing.